

JOHN TEMPLE

RALPH DURAND



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JOHN TEMPLE



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TORONTO



“Then the mighty Monomatapa . . . stretched out trembling hands till they touched Temple’s feet.”

MERCHANT ADVENTURER, CONVICT
AND CONQUISTADOR

A NOVEL

BY

RALPH DURAND

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Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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DEDICATED
TO THE DEAR LADY
WHO
UNCONSCIOUSLY SAT FOR THE PORTRAIT
OF
DONA BEATRIZ

FOREWORD

EVERY schoolboy has heard tales as true as they are wonderful of the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru, but comparatively few boys or men know that a tale, almost as wonderful and romantic and every bit as true, might be written of the attempt made by Francisco Barreto to establish a great Portuguese South African Empire. The reason for this is three-fold. (1) The Spanish conquistadores Cortes and Pizarro succeeded, whereas Barreto failed, not through lack of courage and enterprise, but through famine, disease, and treachery. (2) Cortes and Pizarro found States possessing almost every element of advanced civilization, but the civilized State which Barreto hoped to find and subdue had no more real existence than the fabled court of Prester John. (3) Prescott, the historian of the conquests of Mexico and Peru, is known and read throughout Europe and America, whereas the historians of Barreto's expedition are half forgotten even in Portugal.

While travelling in the Zambesi valley, on the

very ground over which Barreto's expedition passed, I saw relics of the days when Portugal was at the height of her power, and heard from my Portuguese friends tales half-remembered and strangely distorted of the gallant achievements of the Portuguese conquistadores. These induced me to learn for myself as much as I could of the history of Portuguese East Africa, and later to attempt to make the deeds of the conquistadores better known than they are. I used the novel as my medium because the tale, though true, seemed too romantic for sober history. The reader will easily distinguish which is fact and which is fiction if he remembers this — that all that is best in the book is fact, and that the rest is the product of my imagination.

I have taken a liberty with history in recording the fate of John Temple. It is true that an Englishman, the bearer of the letter from Queen Elizabeth to Akbar, the Great Mogul (which is reproduced word for word in Chapter I.), was captured by the Portuguese at Ormuz and carried to Goa. Unlike John Temple, however, he contrived to escape from Goa, visited Akbar's court, and, after wandering for many years in the East, returned to England and was instrumental in founding the East India Company.

It might be supposed that I have also taken liberties with history in colouring too highly the

sufferings of the shipwrecked Portuguese. So far from this being the case, I have toned down the account of Senhora Ribeiro's death, the actual circumstances of which were too terrible to be introduced in a novel.

Those who wish to compare what I have written with what actually occurred will find the Portuguese Historical Records translated in G. M. Theal's *Records of South-East Africa*.

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JOHN TEMPLE



JOHN TEMPLE

PROLOGUE

“ Behold the Benomatapa’s puissant reign
Of salvage Negroes, rude and noisome race,
Where shall for Holy Faith be foully slain
Martyred Gonzalo, suffering sore disgrace.”

*Sir Richard Burton’s translation of
Camoens’s “ Lusiad.”*

NEARLY three and a half centuries ago, on the outskirts of a village situated in the country now known as Mashonaland, a Portuguese adventurer stood, as the shadows lengthened towards the horizon, watching just such a scene as one may see at eventide in any Mashonaland village to-day. He saw the sun setting behind huge tors of bare grey granite that stood up boldly out of the plain, clearly defined against the glowing sky. He saw the glint of the sunset shining through the cloud of golden dust that was raised by the hoofs of the cattle and goats as they returned from the pasture ; gangs of men filling large shallow baskets with the tender, newly-hatched locusts that swarmed on the stems of the long grass ; and a cluster of elders, whose age and rank freed them from the obligation to labour, gossiping at the

village gate. He heard the songs sung by the womenfolk as they trailed upwards from the river balancing large pots of water on their heads; the shrill voices of the little children who chased their mothers' fowls from underneath the granary eaves shouting, "Enter the pen, enter the pen, the sun goes, the sun goes," the harsh metallic clutter uttered by the villagers' half-wild half-domesticated guinea-fowls as they went to roost in the branches of the tallest trees.

Suddenly a curious incident occurred. From within the village a shrill cry was raised, and all within earshot paused to clap their hands and mutter "Long life to our lord." The barbaric king who held his court within the village walls had done some trivial thing, coughed perhaps, sneezed, sighed, or drunk a draught of water, and all who valued their lives were compelled at the command of the court herald to exorcise any evil spirits that might use the occasion to compass evil to their king. The Portuguese soldier of fortune hastily followed the example of those around him, for it served his purpose to humour the whims of 'The Lord of the Mountain,' as the dusky potentate at whose court he lived was called. At a time when his countrymen were harrying Arab merchant-seamen in the Red Sea and on the East African coast, wringing tribute from timorous Indian rajahs and committing piracies throughout the length and breadth of the Eastern seas, this man, in pursuance of far-sighted deep-laid plans, had penetrated unprotected, almost

unarmed, with but two companions, far beyond the uttermost fringe of Portugal's East African conquests. While serving as a soldier at the Portuguese garrison of Sofala he had heard rumours of a country as large as Spain, ruled by a prince who bore the dynastic title of Monomatapa, or 'Lord of the Mountain,' whose court was situated two months' journey from the sea, whose regiments were garrisoned in wonderful stone-walled forts of vast strength that had been built by no human hands, whose stores of ivory would have sufficed to build a palace, and whose gold mines were of a richness such as not even the Spaniards had found in Mexico and Peru. To a man imbued with the spirit of that age no danger was too great to be faced, no chance too hazardous to be undertaken, so long as the prize in view were worth the winning. Inspired with the idea of finding a means of controlling Monomatapa's wealth, Antonio Caiado and his companions had quitted the safety of the Sofala garrison, journeyed on foot to Monomatapa's court, won his confidence, entered his service, and organized his army, and were endeavouring by loyal service to prepare the way for disloyal intrigue that would enable them by one sudden and vigorous masterstroke to obtain possession of his throne. On this 16th day of March, in the year 1561, however, it was still necessary for Caiado to play the part of the loyal courtier. He clapped his hands vigorously, therefore, and recited the formula like a loyal servant of the great Monomatapa.

As the hand-clapping ceased, the sound of shrill laughter rose from a group of children that clustered jostling and shouting round a seated figure. Caiado stepped forward to reprimand the man who allowed the children to forget the homage they owed to their king, but his rebuke remained unuttered when he saw that the children were crowding round an old white-bearded man clothed in the habit of the recently formed Order of Jesus. It was not seemly that Antonio Caiado, a mere plebeian and layman, should admonish Father Dom Gonzalo da Silveira, who was not only a priest but a member of one of the noblest families in Portugal. The soldier's respect for the Jesuit depended, however, on more than mere homage to rank and the Church. Swashbuckler though he was, he could appreciate the sincerity and devotion of a man who, disdaining the ease and luxury he might have enjoyed, had faced the difficulties and dangers of a land journey in tropical Africa, and, refusing the presents of cattle, gold, and slaves which the king had offered him, had settled down to a life of poverty and hardship, determined to devote the few remaining years of his life to winning Monomatapa and his subjects to his own faith.

"Ah, senhor!" said the old man, as the children parted to let Caiado pass. "See how babes and sucklings rebuke those who think themselves wise! Thinking to amuse these little ones, I showed them some of those string puzzles our nurses taught us, but no sooner had I made the 'Cats' Cradle' than

a mannikin no taller than your knee plucked the string from my fingers and showed me a dozen figures more complicated and ingenious than any that our Portuguese children know. It gives me great hope for my Holy Mission. If such as these show intelligence in trivial things, may I not hope that they will be able to comprehend the higher things which it is my privilege to teach them?"

"What success have you with the fathers?" asked Caiado, obeying the gesture by which the priest invited him to be seated. "Have you baptized any more to-day?"

"Not less than fifty. The work progresses amazingly since their king embraced the true Faith. Senhor, have you ever reflected what a glorious opportunity is ours? What is the name of the mountain yonder?"

"The Kaffirs call it Fura."

"Now look down into the valley. Who built those massive walls that are now falling into ruin?"

Father Gonzalo pointed to one of those mysterious clusters of ruins, still to be found in many parts of Mashonaland and Matabeleland, speculation as to the origin of which arouses much heated controversy among archæologists. Caiado, having no opinion of his own to offer, quoted that of the Arabs that traded at Monomatapa's court.

"The Moors say that they were built by the Devil," he replied dubiously.

Father Gonzalo laughed. "They pay homage to the fiend whom they serve. I have a better theory.

Listen. I believe that that mountain which the Kaffirs call Fura is the Ophir of the Old Testament; that in those ruins once dwelt the soldiers of the Queen of Sheba, who in the opinion of the glorious St. Jerome was mistress of all the land of Ethiopia that lies to the south of Egypt, and that this very country in which we now are is none other than the land from which Solomon — whom may God have! — obtained gold, silver, and rare timber, ivory, apes, and peacocks. It is no wild dream. Listen to the proof. Of gold and ivory there is in this country great abundance. You have seen the gold, have you not?"

"Not often, and I do not know where they find it. Where the mines are is known only to a few, for Monomatapa keeps the trade in his own hands, but there is no lack of it. While I was with the king one day they brought him a lump of pure gold, pitted like coral, as large as a man's head. Lest his enemies should hear of it and make war on him, he told them to bury it again. He said it would breed more."

"Gold there is, then, and no doubt silver also. Pearls you must yourself have seen at Sofala. Rich and precious timber both you and I have seen in the forests by the coast. Peacocks I have not seen, yet there must be some, for do not the king's chief warriors wear on their heads crests of peacocks' feathers? And as for apes, why look — there is a troop of the rascals even now stealing down from the hill-side to plunder yonder cornfield. What think you?"

Father Gonzalo, his face beaming with enthusiasm, turned to Caiado to hear his answer, but the soldier, who knew little about Solomon and still less about Ophir or the glorious St. Jerome, but whose life depended on noting anything that might indicate a change in the friendly attitude of those around him, was occupied with other thoughts. While the priest was speaking a man had come out of the village and driven away the children who till then had been standing in silence, staring at the two Portuguese and patiently waiting for the elder to devise some new amusement for them. Caiado noted this, and noted, moreover, that the man had approached them without the customary salute.

"I am uneasy, Father," he said. "The man who drove away the children is one of the king's councillors. His manner was rude, though you, perhaps, who have been but a few weeks in the country and cannot yet speak with the people without an interpreter, noticed nothing unusual. Yesterday, he would not have dared to treat us like that. I am afraid some mischief-maker has carried word to the king that when, awhile ago, all men were commanded to clap their hands in the king's honour, you and the children did not obey. The king does not readily excuse anything that he considers a slight on his dignity, and the Moors, who hate you for fear you should undermine their influence with the king, would gladly seize any opportunity of accusing you."

"You are over-cautious, senhor," replied Gonzalo

impatiently. "The king is now a Christian, and has done with heathen practices and hates the followers of the False Prophet as much as you and I. If he takes notice of the matter I will rebuke him. To return to our conversation. What think you of my theory? Have we not a glorious opportunity? Does it not seem as if Divine Providence has guided our steps hither?"

Now, Caiado and Father Gonzalo regarded the wealth of Mashonaland from totally different standpoints. Both men honestly believed that, since the Pope had given to Portugal all the lands between the Cape of Good Hope eastwards to the Pacific as he had given America to Spain, the King of Portugal and his subjects were the rightful owners of whatever wealth those lands should be found to contain; but whereas Father Gonzalo considered that such wealth had been given to Portugal only in order to assist her in achieving the spiritual conquest of the East, Caiado believed that it could with perfect honesty be used to aggrandize Portugal and enrich those of her soldiers into whose hands it should fall. For which reason the soldier misunderstood the priest when he spoke of a glorious opportunity.

"The land is rich without doubt," he replied, "whether Solomon's wealth came from here or not, but his Majesty will need a large army to conquer it, and so long as all soldiers drafted from Portugal are sent to the Malabar coast ——"

"His Majesty will need no army here but the

soldiers of Christ, no weapons but the blessed Sacraments. In India the followers of the False Prophet are powerful, and must be broken by the power of the sword. Here their power is already gone. The king is already won to the service of Christ. Have but a little patience, and Monomatapa, under my guidance, will realize his duty as a true son of the Church, and gladly surrender his wealth that it may be used to break the infidels. That is our glorious opportunity. As I look down on those ruins and reflect that the same land, from which in old times came the wealth with which Solomon glorified God, will again be used to God's glory in bringing all Asia to the true faith, I cannot but believe that Divine Providence guided our footsteps hither. Come with me. It is time for Vespers, and afterwards I will show you the passages of Scripture which prove to me that this land is none other than the land of Ophir."

They rose and passed through the village, each occupied with his own thoughts, the priest devising rosy schemes for the evangelization of the world, the soldier, more concerned with his own welfare, anxiously noting the demeanour of the people they passed. The day's work was done, and the village was rapidly filling with those who had spent the day hunting, herding the cattle or working in the cornfields. Some saluted the Europeans with the respect due to men high in the king's favour. Men clapped their hands and scraped their feet on the ground. Women folded their arms across their

breasts and curtsied. Children looked up from their play and piped, "We see you, masters." Others, on the other hand, behaved as if the two Europeans were malevolent wizards whom it was dangerous to encounter. Men avoided them by turning aside from the path to slink behind the high wattle fences that encircled each cluster of huts, and women, grabbing as many children as they could carry, and calling to others to follow them, fled into the shelter of the huts, and turning stared through the low doorways at the strangers with eyes that gleamed with mingled fear and hate.

"Something has happened, Father," said Caiado. "The people behave as if we had the evil eye. I fear that the Moors have poisoned the king's mind against us. I had better go and ask an audience with him. If there is danger about, it is better to face it than to stay in ignorance of it."

"You have too little faith, my son. Still, if you wish to do so, wait until after Vespers and I will accompany you and reason with Monomatapa."

They entered the little church which the king had caused to be built in his first zeal for the new faith, or perhaps in his desire to please the man who lavished presents of calico and beads on all who submitted to the rite of baptism. It was a rough, barn-like building with earthen floor and thatched roof. On the walls, which were made of wattle plastered with mud, hung crude highly-coloured pictures of sacred subjects, and one large allegorical picture designed and painted by Father Gonzalo

himself. This last was a representation of heaven and hell. At the bottom of the picture Satan, distinguished by horns and tail, brandished a trident over the heads of six men, one white and five black, who cowered among the flames. A spiral cloud of smoke occupied the centre of the picture, and expanded near the top into a golden cloud on which, round the Throne of God, sat another six men, five of whom were white and one, clothed in gorgeous blue and scarlet cloth, was black. Candles stood on a roughly-fashioned altar draped in common blue calico, above which, in startling contrast to the surrounding roughness, hung a white marble crucifix of a beauty equal to the finest products of the Italian sculptors of that time.

The church, having only one small window, was so dark that when they first entered it neither of the men noticed a figure crouching in the farthest corner, but as the priest stepped forward to prepare for the evening service a man stood up and, crouching low as if to avoid being seen from the outside, came towards them. Caiado, who had seen enough during the last hour to put him on his guard against possible treachery, drew his dagger and ran forward to shield the defenceless priest.

“Stand back!” he commanded in the vernacular. “Who are you?”

“Gently, senhor, gently,” remonstrated Father Gonzalo, noticing Caiado’s threatening attitude though he did not understand his words. “This is one of those whom I baptized to-day. No doubt

he has come early lest he should be late for Vespers, or perhaps he has some question to ask concerning his newly-found faith. Interpret for me, but do not speak so roughly."

"What is it you want?" asked Caiado, sheathing his dagger but standing near enough to the priest to ward off any sudden blow.

"Sir, I am Mpondo, a soldier of the king's bodyguard. There is bad news. I have come to warn the Teacher of New Things in order that he may have time to make magic with which to turn aside the spears of those that are coming to kill him."

"How do you know that any one intends to kill him?"

With a good deal of circumlocution and much wandering from the point the man told his tale. While on guard that afternoon at the door of the king's council hut, the Mohammedans who traded at Monomatapa's court and who had from the first endeavoured to prevent the Portuguese from gaining any influence over him had come to the king and denounced Father Gonzalo as a traitor. He possessed, they said, the bones of a dead man's hand, with which he could cause a famine. They had then declared that he was an emissary of the Portuguese who under the pretence of preaching his religion was preparing the way for the strange nation that had already established itself in some of the coast districts. They pointed out that Father Gonzalo had been well received by Tshepute, a

rebel vassal of Monomatapa, and finally asserted that the ceremony of baptism was a magic rite by which he designed to bring under his power the king and all others who submitted to it. The king in great terror had entreated the Mohammedans to advise him, and after some discussion had given orders that the missionary was to be murdered that night in his sleep.

“And why have you brought the news?” demanded Caiado, doubting whether the man had some private motive for frightening the priest.

“Sir, when the Teacher of New Things poured water on my head this morning uttering magic words, the spirits of my ancestors came upon me and told me that I was his man. Therefore,” he continued indignantly, “I have risked my life to warn him. If the king knew that I had repeated words spoken in the council hut, I, my wife and my children would die a slow death on an ants’ nest. My wife and children are already flying to seek shelter with Tshepute, and I shall follow them before the moon rises. If the Teacher of New Things chooses, I will guide him. If not, let me go. I do not wish my skull to be a nest for field mice.”

Caiado turned and interpreted Mpondo’s warning. The old priest listened with a puzzled expression on his face, as if he could with difficulty understand what was said, and made Caiado cross-examine the native.

“Do you believe it?” he asked at last, turning to his fellow countryman.

"I fear it is true, Father," replied Caiado.

Father Gonzalo opened his mouth to speak, checked himself, and began pacing hurriedly up and down the church. Then for a while he stood at the doorway, and by the light of the still glowing sky the soldier could see his face, that had suddenly turned haggard and worn, working with emotion. Presently he turned towards Caiado.

"Let my humiliation warn you against spiritual pride, my son," he said in a weak but calm and steady voice, a faint smile on his lips. "But an hour ago I was boasting to you of my plans for the evangelization of Asia, speaking as if I were an instrument chosen of God out of all nations and generations to win those who walk in darkness to the light. I am rebuked for my presumption. My sacrifice is rejected. I am weighed in the balance and" — his voice quavered — "am found unworthy."

The old man resumed his restless pacing, and for a while no one spoke. Suddenly his bearing changed. He stood still with head erect, energy and decision in every line of his face. The disappointed dreamer had given place to the man of action.

"But this is no time for idle regrets," he said. "Our countrymen must be warned to flee lest the king slay them also. Tell this man, the only one of all those I have baptized who has proved himself a true son of the Church, to summon your companions, Pedro Dias and Luis da Cunha. Father André you yourself must summon, for he, having

been in the country no longer than myself, would not understand Mpondo. You will probably find him among the ruins in the valley, for I asked him this morning to write an account of them for the Archbishop at Goa. Return here as speedily as possible, and try to avoid notice. As for me, it is time for me to say Vespers — for the last time.”

Caiado and Mpondo hurried out on their respective errands, and the priest busied himself with preparations for the evening service. Taking a match that smouldered in a niche of the wall, he blew it into a flame and lit the altar candles. Then from a small chest that contained the church furniture he took a bell, and, standing at the door, rang an unheeded summons to prayer. None came, but when, after saying the Ave and Paternoster, he crossed over to the right of the altar he was conscious that a hundred eyes glared at him out of the fast falling dusk.

When an hour later the four Portuguese, followed by Mpondo, stealthily entered the church, they found Father Gonzalo on his knees before the altar.

“I have been praying Our Lady of Help to guard you to-night,” he said, rising and turning towards them. “You are late in coming, senhors.”

“We dared not come before, Father,” said Pedro Dias. “There was a crowd at the church door. If they had seen us enter, word would have been carried to Monomatapa, and he would have suspected that we had been warned. Perhaps even now we are watched.”

"We must be quick, then. You have a perilous journey before you; fortify yourselves with the Blessed Sacrament. Senhor Dias, make your confession to Father André. Senhor da Cunha, come to me."

As swiftly as possible the two priests confessed and absolved the three adventurers, performing the same office afterwards for each other. Father Gonzalo then partook of the Sacrament and administered it to the others. When they rose from their knees he took the sacred vessels, wrapped them carefully in the linen cloths that lay on the altar, and handed them to his colleague.

"Guard these with your life," he said. "I would not have them fall into sacrilegious hands. Now kneel for my blessing before you go."

"But you, Father, you must accompany us!" exclaimed the others.

Father Gonzalo smiled.

"When the Father Superior bids me desert my post I will do so. Till then I stay."

"But, Father, consider," exclaimed da Cunha. "What good purpose will be served by the sacrifice of your life?"

"I can show the king how a soldier of Christ and a nobleman of Portugal can die. The noble task of converting these erring children is denied me, but at least I can prepare the way for those more fortunate ones who will come after me. What respect would the heathen have hereafter for the Church if the first of its servants to come among

them were to show that he valued his wretched life more than his mission? Now you must go."

"Not I," cried Caiado, inspired by the example of courage higher than his own. "Father André, the holy vessels are entrusted to you, and you will need the help of Senhor Dias and Senhor da Cunha, if you are to carry them to the coast. You three must go. I shall stay. It may be that Monomatapa will change his mind. He is always moved by the whim of the moment. Should he do so, Father Gonzalo would be left here with none to interpret for him. Father, you will let me stay?"

"Swear to me that you will not needlessly imperil your life and that you will remain concealed lest my murderers finding you with me should kill you also?"

"I swear it," replied Caiado reluctantly.

"On that condition you may stay. Now, senhors."

With uplifted hands he blessed them.

"Farewell," he added, as they rose from their knees. "Go swiftly. A sacred charge is entrusted to you. Bear witness that I forgive the king because of his youth and because the Moors deceived him. See that Mpondo is suitably rewarded for his loyalty. *Dominus vobiscum.*"

"*Et cum spiritu tuo,*" responded the Portuguese as they hurried out of the church. Father Gonzalo stood at the door and watched them slink cautiously through the village, avoiding the circles of light cast by the dying fires at which the evening meals had

been cooked, darting from one mass of shadows to another till they reached the village gate and disappeared. Then he turned to Caiado.

"Now, my son, it is time for you to leave me. As soon as I am dead fly from this place and bear the news to Sofala. Do you see that dark shadow between the two huts yonder, where the eaves almost touch each other? Crouch there and you will see what happens to me without being seen yourself. I shall walk up and down in front of the church, for I am too impatient for the end to sit quietly within. First help me don my vestments. I sup with God to-night. It is fitting that I should enter His presence suitably attired. Then leave me to my own thoughts. I wish to prepare myself for my glorious journey."

From his hiding-place Caiado watched the priest walking up and down in front of the church. Occasionally he paused for a moment, facing eastwards, and the rising moon shone down on a face that was beautiful with the peace that passeth all understanding. Then he would resume his tramp, walking to and fro with the slow measured pace of one who is deep in thought.

As the night wore on the soldier's courage began to wane. The loneliness, the suspense, and more trivial causes than these — his cramped position, the cold, and the fleas that dropped on to him from the thatch under which he crouched — all served to diminish the enthusiasm with which the priest's fearlessness had inspired him. He lacked none of



“ ‘ Would you rob me of my crown ? ’ demanded the old man sternly. ”

the virile courage necessary to take great risks on the chance of winning a great reward, and in the heat of battle would have met death with a laugh on his lips, but the reckless adventurous life he had led had not tended to develop in him the spiritual courage required by a man who dies for an ideal. Were he in the Jesuit's position, he reflected, he would seek safety for a month or two and come back when Monomatapa had had time to forget his suspicions. As the slow hours wore on the glory of a martyr's crown seemed less and less desirable, till at last he emerged from his hiding-place determined to make one final effort to make the priest see the wisdom of worldly prudence.

"Father, listen," he whispered. "Think whether the cause you serve would not benefit more by your life than your death. There is still time to escape. I know a sure hiding-place where we could wait till morning, and a path over the mountains ——"

"Would you rob me of my crown?" demanded the old man sternly. "Leave me if you will, I absolve you from your word, but do not tempt me to betray my trust."

"I will not leave you, Father," replied the soldier, his courage once more gaining strength from the calm resolution of the priest.

"Return to your hiding-place, then, and do not come between me and my thoughts again."

Again Caiado hid himself, and again the priest paced backwards and forwards, moving now with

quick, restless steps as if by hurrying he could the sooner reach the moment that would set him free. At last, near midnight, he stopped, sighed, looked round him and came towards Caiado.

“They are long in coming, senhor. I can walk no longer. I shall lie down within. They can find me there as well as here.”

He turned and entered the church. As he did so a dozen swarthy figures crept stealthily out of as many hiding-places and followed him. Caiado heard a cry, a clear ringing cry not of fear but of triumph.

“*In manus tuas, Domine —*”

A gasp. A crash and then silence. Caiado ran to the window of the church. By the light of the flickering candles he could see the form of the priest prone upon the floor. His white vestments were stained red with blood and the marble crucifix that had hung above the altar lay across his prostrate form broken into a dozen pieces. For a moment he looked, then turned and fled into the night.

So died Father Dom Gonzalo da Silveira, the first Christian to suffer martyrdom in South Africa. The account of his death as described by Antonio Caiado reached Portugal rather more than a year later. As it passed from mouth to mouth it gathered wealth of incident till many believed that the grave into which Monomatapa's scavengers had thrown the body of the martyr was miraculously honoured. Supernatural lights hovered over it by night, birds

sang psalms in the branches of the trees that overshadowed it by day, and both by night and day lions guarded the sacred spot from the pollution of sacrilegious feet. The tale aroused the militant spirit of a people who thought it a virtue to propagate their faith with the sword. It appealed especially to the imagination of a child who, under the influence of Jesuit tutors, yearned for the day to come when he should ascend his dead father's throne in order that he might infuse new life into the national crusade against the followers of the False Prophet. Within two months of his coronation, King Sebastian summoned a council of priests and lawyers, who solemnly declared that a war waged against Monomatapa in revenge for the murder of Father Gonzalo would be a righteous one. The Pope granted absolution to any one who might die in the projected campaign. Immediately afterwards the Admiral of the King's Galleys, Francisco Barreto, was appointed "Captain-General and Conqueror of the Mines of Monomatapa and of the kingdoms lying between Capo das Correntes and that of Guardafui." He was given three ships, 100,000 cruzados for immediate use, and a promise of a similar sum yearly till the conquest of Monomatapa should be accomplished; and a swift sailing ship was despatched to Goa with orders to the Viceroy of India to furnish the expedition with men, provisions, horses, camels, asses, and military stores. Francisco Barreto called for a thousand volunteers. So popular was the campaign that he could within

three days have filled his ships twice over with fidalgoes and cavalleiros. To priests the campaign was welcome as an opportunity of extending the dominion of the Church. Soldiers welcomed it as affording a better chance of winning fame and promotion than could be found in Europe. Patriots welcomed it as a means whereby a great South African empire might be added to Portugal's other conquests. Adventurers joined the expedition in order to obtain a share of the vast wealth which Monomatapa was reported to possess, and religious enthusiasts enlisted in the hope of securing as priceless relics the bones of the martyred saint.

CHAPTER I

HOW JOHN TEMPLE, JEWEL MERCHANT, FELL INTO THE HANDS OF THE PORTUGUESE

“ Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it ;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant
Over the whole earth,
Still is it Thor’s-Day ! ”

“ *The Song of King Olaf.* ”

It is frequently the fate of Viceroys, Proconsuls, Generals, and Colonial Governors to receive from headquarters instruction which they know to be unwise, impracticable, or impossible to execute. This was the case with Dom Luiz d’Ataide, Viceroy of India, when he received from his royal master, Sebastian, King of Portugal, not only a notification that the supplies and reinforcements he so sorely needed were to be diverted that year for the purposes of the costly and hazardous expedition which Francisco Barreto was to lead into the interior of South-East Africa, but also a command to assist in equipping that expedition with men, arms, and military stores.

At no time during his term of office would Dom Luiz have welcomed this command or found it

an easy one to obey. He knew far better than King Sebastian or his advisers the strength and weakness of his countrymen. They had won their supremacy of the East with their fleet, and had been able to gain a footing only in such places as afforded easy access to the sea. Once only, when they marched into Abyssinia, had they undertaken a military expedition on land, and of this expedition only five men had ever returned to the coast.

Even in those coast districts where they had already established themselves the Portuguese were finding it increasingly difficult to hold their own. The captains of every one of the isolated garrisons that were scattered all round the coasts of Africa and Asia, from Sofala in the west to Macao and Ternate in the east, sent frequent and urgent requisitions to Goa for more men, more arms, and more ammunition. Every fleet that sailed from Goa to Lisbon carried a similar petition from the Viceroy of India to the King of Portugal. Even in India itself Portugal's position was threatened: on land by native armies led and disciplined by Russian and Venetian adventurers; at sea by Turkish corsairs that swept down from Suez, harried Portuguese shipping, and sailed away before reprisals could be made.

At this particular time, the middle of January, 1571, the command to assist in equipping the African expedition seemed almost like a grim jest, for during the last ten months Goa had been besieged on the landward side by 100,000 men under

Portugal's old enemy, Ali Adil, Shah of Bijapur. So far from there being men to spare for new enterprises, press gangs were ransacking the town, and even violating the seclusion of the zenanas, in the search for men who could be driven to the defence of the bastions. So far from there being food to spare, men were daily deserting to the enemy, selling their honour and their future at the price of a full meal. Every cannon, every falcon, every arquebus was in use, and so low had the reserve of ammunition fallen that the gunners were obliged to use stones in place of cannon balls.

It was somewhat natural, therefore, that when the Viceroy's Council met to consider the king's letter its members debated how best they could evade compliance with the spirit of his commands without flagrantly disregarding the letter of its instructions. A meeting was convened for this purpose in a part of the Viceroy's palace that had once been the audience chamber of the predecessors of the Sultan whose cannon were at that moment thundering at the walls of Goa. The first to arrive were two civilian officials, the Quartermaster-General and the Comptroller of Revenue. There was little in the appearance of either of these fidalgoes to suggest the distress and anxiety that prevailed in the city. Each was attired in rich brocade, stiff with gold lace and studded with jewels. Each, as he stepped out of his palanquin, was attended by a pair of slaves, who fanned him constantly on either cheek. They greeted each other with lengthy

punctilious compliments, as if they had little to do and much leisure in which to do it. Together they paced across the richly inlaid floor of the hall and languidly took their seats at the council table.

"Out of evil comes good. The more men we send to Africa, the fewer mouths there will be to feed," remarked the Quartermaster-General. "This morning I was again obliged to reduce the soldiers' rations."

"It is a pity that his Excellency cannot ship off a hundred lusty monks," said the Comptroller of Revenue. "I wish we had as many soldiers as we have monks, and as few monks as we have soldiers. The city is as full of them as a dog is full of fleas."

"An excellent suggestion, senhor! Let me recommend you to place it before his Grace," replied the Quartermaster, maliciously, raising his voice.

The other turned and recognized the Archbishop of Goa, who had entered the hall, and was at that moment ascending the steps of the dais on which the council table stood.

"What were you discussing, Senhor Comptroller?" asked the priest. "Some matters of finance too deep for the comprehension of a mere Churchman?" he suggested, with a crafty smile that all laymen feared, as the unhappy Comptroller of Revenue mumbled something incoherent and became silent. Fortunately for the latter, they were interrupted at this moment by the entry of the Chief Magistrate and the Port Captain.

"Greeting, most excellent and illustrious senhors,"

said the Archbishop to the newcomers. "What is the news? I hear that the Ormuz fleet arrived in the anchorage last night."

"Good news and bad, your Grace," replied the Port Officer. "The bad is that Chaul is besieged by the King of Ahmednugger. The good is, that as the fleet could not call there, it has brought on the horses, camels, and asses that were destined for that port. As they are of no use here while the siege lasts, I shall recommend his Excellency to send them on to Africa for Francisco Barreto."

While he was speaking, a sergeant and a file of pikemen entered the hall and lined its sides. Immediately afterwards the blast of a trumpet was heard, and a command, "Make way for his Excellency!" A pair of huge iron-studded doors at the bottom of the hall were flung open. The sergeant called his soldiers to attention, and the members of the Council rose to their feet and bowed as the Viceroy, accompanied by two military officers, entered the hall and took his seat at the table.

The appearance of the three soldiers presented a striking contrast to that of the civilian officials. Their faces were begrimed with powder and sweat. Their battered breastplates were splashed with blood, and their shabby leather breeches scorched and tattered. Such men as these had made Portugal Mistress of the East. Such men as these others who sat at the council table were to hasten her downfall.

"Be brief with your business, senhors," said the Viceroy, easing his sword-belt and cutting short the

courtly greetings of the councillors. "I must be back at the north bastion before noon. First, I may tell you that the Senhor Commandant made a sally last night and captured five cannon from the Moors, so that we have now more cannon than gunners to serve them. Barreto can have three of them. There are three or four cannon lying damaged at the arsenal that he may also have. His armourers must tinker them up. As to the other supplies——"

The Port Officer began to speak of the horses and camels that had arrived from Ormuz and his reasons for suggesting that they should be forwarded to Africa. Before he was halfway through his remarks, Dom Luiz signed an order for their despatch, tossed it over to the Port Officer, and continued —

"Now as to men. Forty cavalleiros who came out with last year's fleet have volunteered for the African expedition. They thought the pagoda tree would rain golden apples into their laps, and finding little in Goa but hard knocks and short commons, wish to try their luck farther afield. They may go, with my curses. They will soon wish themselves back again. How many prisoners under sentence of death have you, Senhor Aveador?"

"One hundred and fifty, your Excellency," replied the Chief Magistrate, "and one man, an Englishman, brought from Ormuz in the fleet that arrived last night."

"An Englishman! He must be a daring fellow to hope to milk the Indian cow under our very noses. Have them all brought in."

The soldiers filed out, and returned guarding a crowd of unhappy wretches, who stood mute and sullen, with downcast despairing eyes, while the Aveador read out the charges on which they had been convicted. They were for the most part men of the lowest and most ignorant class of Portuguese. Men who for some crime, great or trivial, had been drafted into the Indian army, and, arriving in the East at a time when there was no special need for their services, had been allowed to follow their own devices. Without food or lodging — for the Government made no provision for soldiers not on active service ; without money — for the pay they had earned on the voyage out had been embezzled by their superior officers ; without employment — for they could not compete with the skilled native craftsmen of Goa — they had had no choice between crime, starvation, or sinking to the level of the lowest dregs of the native population. Some had been convicted of smuggling, robbing, and even piracy. Some were accused of selling information to Adil Shah's spies. Some had deserted to the enemy and been recaptured. Many, enfeebled by the vices learned from the natives among whom they had herded, had become too cowardly to face the enemy, and had therefore been sentenced to death on a dozen fantastic charges in order that the Chief Magistrate might have excuse for sending them to Africa.

“Prisoners, you are under sentence of death,” said Dom Luiz, signing the warrant which the Chief

Justice had handed to him. "By my clemency your sentence is commuted. You will be condemned for life to the conquest of Monomatapa. Go to Africa and amend your naughty lives. Now for the Englishman. We will have some sport with him."

"Bring forward John Temple," cried the Chief Magistrate.

There was a stir of interest in the hall. The councillors stopped yawning and sat upright. The soldiers craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the Englishman who had dared to enter Portugal's Indian territory. Even the slaves forgot for the moment to fan their masters. Accustomed though they were to see strange faces in the city where Persians, Arabs, and Armenians haggled with men from Burmah, Java, and China, they had never seen a man like the one who now stood before Dom Luiz. Though he wore the long loose robe of an Arab camel-merchant, he was like no Arab that had ever brought camels to Goa. His face was square, his body short and strongly built, his hair and beard were pale yellow, and his naturally fair skin, wherever it was exposed, had been burned by the sun to a bright brick red.

His demeanour too was very different from that of most prisoners who appeared before Dom Luiz. Though he had been roughly handled — the heavy fetters he wore had chafed open sores on his wrists and ankles, and flies swarmed round a cut on his forehead — there was nothing craven in his bearing.

He appeared even as if he wished deliberately to insult the dignity of the court, for when one of the soldiers who held him jerked his manacles, the Englishman responded with a blow from his elbow that sent the man sprawling on the floor.

Suddenly arrested without just cause, robbed of all he possessed, subjected to the irritation of innumerable discomforts—heat, suffocation, foul smell, and loathsome vermin in the hold of the ship in which for three weeks he had been confined—jeered at and bullied by the soldiers who guarded him, and then brought into the presence of a man from whom no mercy was to be expected, it was natural that he met the Viceroy's contemptuous stare with eyes that gleamed with the malignity of a man who sees no hope of escape, but is determined through sheer spite to fight doggedly while life lasts.

"What is the charge, Senhor Aveador?" inquired the Viceroy.

"In the first place, your Excellency, this Englishman is accused of engaging in trade in the town of Ormuz to the prejudice of his Majesty the King of Portugal, to whom his Holiness, Pope Alexander the Sixth, granted sole dominion over the Indies."

"Since when did the world belong to the Pope?" shouted Temple, defiantly.

Dom Luiz leaned back in his chair and laughed. The truculence of this man afforded a welcome novelty in the day's business.

"What authority the Pope has, most illustrious Englishman," replied the Viceroy, making a pretence

of courtesy for his own amusement, as a cat for her amusement pretends to liberate a mouse, "is a question on which a heretic, such as you obviously are, and a good Catholic like myself are unlikely to agree. If you will look out of the door there you will see our warships. They afford the best authority that you are likely to acknowledge. So long as Portuguese ships control the Eastern seas, so long will Portugal keep the commerce of the East in her own hands."

"But men of other nations traffic freely at Ormuz. I have seen there Frenchmen, Flemings, Almaines, Hungarians, Greeks, Nazaraines, Turks, and Muscovites. They buy and sell without hindrance. Only because I refused to bribe every hanger on of the captain ——"

"Proceed with the charge, Senhor Aveador," said the Viceroy, hastily.

"Furthermore he is accused of being a secret agent of the English Government. Your Excellency will remember that on your accession to office Jallal Ud Din Akbar, King of Cambaia, according to custom, sent to you as Viceroy a present for his Majesty, King Sebastian. This present took the form of a jewel well known in India by the name 'Nour Jehan,' in our tongue 'Light of the World.' Akbar's servants were attacked by robbers on the road and the famous jewel was stolen. Last month your Excellency's spies in Ormuz heard a bazaar rumour that the Nour Jehan had been brought to that town by men ignorant of its immense value,

and that it had been sold for a trifling sum to this Englishman, John Temple."

"The Nour Jehan!" exclaimed the Viceroy. "Why, it is reported to be worth three full cargoes of spices! On my word, Senhor Temple, though you lost your game, you played for a noble stake. Proceed, Senhor Aveador."

"The Captain of Ormuz immediately went with a party of soldiers and searched both this man's lodging and his person. Concealed beneath his clothes he found this letter, addressed to Jallal Ud Din Akbar himself."

"Akbar! The Great Mogul!" exclaimed several councillors.

"The jewel! What about the jewel?" cried the Archbishop, impatiently.

"The prisoner was searched and the Nour Jehan was not found," replied the Chief Magistrate, "but this letter ——"

"This letter," interrupted Dom Luiz, "affords warrant enough to hang a dozen Englishmen. Read, senhors."

The councillors rose from their seats and leant over the table to see the letter. Those of them who could read English gave a gasp of surprise. They recognized it as the first blow struck at Portugal's Indian Empire. Even the Nour Jehan, which most of them believed to have been used merely as a pretext for the arrest of the Englishman, was forgotten as the Viceroy read the letter to the Council.

It ran —

“To His Imperial Highness, Jallal Ud Din Muhamad Akbar, greeting.”

“Elizabeth by the Grace of God Queene of England.

“Most imperial and invincible Prince, our honest subject John Temple, the bringer hereof, who with our favour hath taken in hand the voyage which now he pursueth to the ports and countreys of your Empire, not trusting upon any other ground then upon the favour of your Imperiall clemencie and humanitie, is moued to undertake a thing of so much difficultie, being persvaded that he having entered into so many perils, your Maiestie will not dislike the same, especially if it may appeare that it be not damageable unto your royall Maiestie, and that to your people it will bring some profite: of both which things he, not doubting, with more willing minde hath prepared himselfe for his destinated voyage unto us well liked of. For by this means we perceive, that the profit which by the mutual trade on both sides, al the princes our neighbors in Ye West do receive, Your Imperial Majestie & those that be subject under your dominion, to their great joy and benefit shall have the same, which consisteth in the transporting outward of such things whereof we have plenty, and in bringing in such things as we stand in need of. It cannot otherwise be, but seeing that we are borne and made to have need one of another, & that wee are bound to aide one another, but that your imperial Maiestie wil wel like of it, & by your subiects w^h like indever wil be accepted. For the increase whereof, if your imperial Maiestie shall adde the securitie of passage, with other priviledges most necessary to use the trade with your men, your maiestie shall doe that which belongeth to a most honorable & liberal prince, and deserue so much of us, as by no continuance

or length of time shalbe forgotten, Which request of ours we do most instantly desire to be taken in good part of your maiestie, and so great a benefit towards vs and our men, we shall endeuer by diligence to requite when time shal serue thereunto. The God Almighty long preserue your Imperial maiestie."

"So! senhor. Your queen wishes to have a finger in the Indian pie. I need hardly point out to you that commercial relations between the Queen of England and the Great Mogul would seriously prejudice my Royal Master's revenues; but as it would cause much inconvenience and ill-feeling between two friendly states if your queen were to learn that I had taken upon myself to intercept her letter, it becomes necessary for me—you realize, I trust, the difficulty of my position—to ensure that you never return to relate what has befallen it."

Temple was silent. That letter being in the Viceroy's hands and no English Ambassador or Consul being nearer than Constantinople, nor Englishman of any description nearer than Aleppo, there was nothing to be said.

"Permit me, your Excellency," said the Archbishop, his mind still intent on the Nour Jehan. "The prisoner should, I think, be handed over to an ecclesiastical court. If he be a good Catholic, I shall without difficulty persuade him to enter one of our monasteries and renounce those sordid temporal affairs that cause jealousy between nations. If, on the other hand——"

The Archbishop paused, shrugged his shoulders, and looked at Temple with a sinister smile. The latter uttered an oath. The Archbishop's meaning was clear enough, and Temple knew that it would be better for him to die where he stood than to fall into the clutches of the Inquisition.

"May the foul fiend your master do to you throughout all Eternity as you would do to me!" he cried. "Bound I am and defenceless or you would not dare to taunt me. Were I free for one moment with my fingers round your fat throat, there would be one hell-cat less in the world."

For one moment Temple stood panting and glaring; then, maddened by rage and despair, wrenched himself free from his astonished guards and sprang forwards with uplifted hands. So sudden and unexpected was his action that the Portuguese remained motionless, and the Archbishop would almost certainly have been brained by Temple's descending fetters if the Englishman in his frenzied rush had not tripped and fallen headlong on the steps of the dais.

A dozen soldiers flung themselves upon him. For one moment the amazed councillors saw nothing but a writhing tangle of legs and arms, and then Temple was dragged, kicking and biting, back to his former place. As soon as he saw that he was overpowered, Dom Luiz, who alone had sprung from his seat, re-sheathed the sword he had drawn, and, sitting down, burst into a roar of laughter. There was an old feud between him and the Archbishop.

The Jesuits had formerly been allowed to receive as part of their revenues the complimentary presents which neighbouring rajahs sent to each Viceroy on his accession to office, but Dom Luiz had diverted this source of revenue to the use of the Crown, "which the Jesuits tooke in evil part" (as an old chronicler wrote), "and said the Viceroy was an hereticke." The Archbishop had supported the Jesuits in the controversy that ensued, and Dom Luiz, though obliged to be courteous in his official capacity, was delighted by any occurrence that annoyed or humiliated the powerful Churchman.

"Oh, rare sight! Oh, rare sight!" cried Dom Luiz, as soon as he could speak for laughing. "As good as a bull-fight, if it had but lasted. I cannot let you have him, your Grace. Shame on me if I let a valiant man burn when brave men are so sorely needed! He shall go to Barreto. A man who will threaten the Archbishop of Goa will face the devil himself! Senhor Temple, I would give you your liberty if I could. Failing that, I can give you the opportunity of serving in as gallant and perilous an undertaking as any soldier could desire. You will go to Africa to conquer Monomatapa. The ship sails within three days. I will make an order that the value of the goods taken from you in Ormuz shall be restored to you. See to it, Senhor Aveador."

The prisoners were marched out of the hall. Temple followed meekly, bewildered by the turn in his fortune. He scarcely knew whether death even by torture were not preferable to perpetual exile in

a savage and unknown country from which escape would be far more difficult even than from India. What was life worth, he thought, if he were never again to mingle with men of his own race, never again to laugh with fair-skinned bright-eyed girls, never to see the sunlight dance with the shadows in leafy Surrey lanes? He thought of the companions of his 'prentice days, and the old familiar sound of Bow Bells, and the gay scene in Cheapside—. The memory of Cheapside called up a picture of a certain tavern where men who had bartered with fur-clad Samoyedes in the frozen North foregathered with escaped slaves who had tugged at the oars of Moorish galleys, and seen the camel caravans come into Alexandria laden with the wealth of the mysterious East, a tavern where merchant adventurers listened night after night to tales told by sunburnt seamen of a world that opened wider year by year, tales that had set his spirit on fire, and aroused an ambition that had enticed him to Venice, to Aleppo, to Baghdad, to Ormuz, luring him on till it had landed him in his present miserable plight.

Suddenly a recollection brightened his eye and straightened his back. Desperate though his position was, meagre though his chances were of ever seeing England again, he still had something for which many men would have gaily risked their lives, something which, should he ever escape, would make him rich for life.

The soldiers herded their prisoners in a corner

of the court-house verandah, fearing to take them through the crowded streets until reinforcements arrived. While waiting there Temple felt a touch on his arm, and turning saw a priest who beckoned him aside.

"I have come to help you," he said. "Speak English, so that we shall not be understood. It is possible that I may find a way of setting you free."

The momentary hope that the priest's words inspired died down as Temple examined his face.

"You were in the court just now," he replied. "I saw you talking to the fat priest who wished to clap me into the Inquisition."

"I am his secretary," answered the priest, "and it is he who sent me to you. You cannot know — how should you — the goodness of that holy man. So far from wishing you ill he is deeply concerned for your welfare. He rejoices that you insulted him and would have killed him, for it gives him a blessed opportunity of setting a good example to all of us and showing how a Christian should forgive. Speak the word and he will petition the Viceroy for your release."

"Faith! He need not wait for my permission. There is a condition attached or I am much mistaken."

"The condition is one prompted solely by consideration for your spiritual welfare. It is that you seek the gracious peace of one of our monasteries."

"And exchange one prison for another."

“Or you may have liberty to trade in this city,” added the priest hastily, “if you will help to restore to the Church that which is rightfully hers. Senhor, you know where the Nour Jehan is. If you have not got it, you know who has. Enable the Church to find it, using circumspection lest it should fall into the hands of the Viceroy, and you shall have liberty and the Archbishop’s protection.”

Temple laughed in the priest’s face, and replied jeeringly —

“It seems that the Viceroy would do more for me than that. Take me back into the court, and I will offer it to the highest bidder. It will be rare sport.”

“His Grace even promised to endeavour to obtain for you a passage to Europe,” continued the priest hastily, “and a hundred cruzados” — he paused — “I mean a thousand cruzados. He might even ——”

“Make way there, make way for Dona Beatriz Correa da Mattos,” shouted the sergeant of the guard, elbowing the prisoners to left and right as he cleared a way through the throng. A palanquin had been carried into the courtyard, and from it there stepped a girl who shuddered and clutched her dress timidly as she passed the prisoners. She glanced at the swarthy faces around her with an expression of mingled curiosity and aversion that changed to one of frank astonishment as her notice was attracted by the unusual sight presented by Temple’s yellow beard and brick-red face, and changed again to one



“ ‘ Ah, senhor, what have they done to you ? ’ cried Dona Beatriz impulsively.”

of pity as she saw the swarm of flies that blackened the cut on his forehead.

"Ah, senhor, what have they done to you?" she cried impulsively. "Why does not some one dress your wound?"

"Perhaps they are too busy, Dona," replied Temple in broken Portuguese. "Men who are accustomed to hard knocks take little notice of those that others receive."

"But cannot some one attend to it? Cannot the sergeant send for a surgeon? Ah! Father Sebastian!" She beckoned to a Dominican friar who had just entered the courtyard. "Come here to this poor man. Look at his forehead, and see how the irons have cut into his wrists and ankles. Can you not help him?"

The friar touched Temple's wounds with light, skilful fingers.

"But certainly, Dona Beatriz," he replied. "Just a stitch, a touch with the knife, and a little ointment. How fortunate that I am just come from the hospitals." He produced ointment, linen, and a surgical needle from a bag that hung at his girdle, and calling to a passing water-carrier for water, began to dress the wounds.

The girl watched him for a moment, and turned to go.

"You were coming to see me, Father, I think," she said. "I will await you in the palace. *A Deus*, senhor."

Temple muttered an incoherent reply. He was

making a hurried search through his scant Portuguese vocabulary for a suitable expression of thanks, and before he could remember any phrase more fitting than the formal "Muit' obrigado," the girl had passed on.

"You are fortunate, my unfortunate son," said the priest in a low gentle voice, as he finished his work. "I have heard your story. Though you are a heretic, you may know, perhaps, that God chastens those whom He loves, and you are chastened indeed."

He smiled kindly, bowed and passed on into the palace.

Meanwhile the Viceroy's Council had resumed discussion of the reinforcements to be sent to Francisco Barreto. They had chosen for the command of the ship a man whose influence with King Sebastian was so great, and whose fitness for any sort of responsible employment so small, that he proved a constant source of embarrassment to the Viceroy, and lest the ship should come to grief through the captain's incapacity they had appointed as his lieutenant a capable and energetic soldier who, through lack of influence and money, had grown grey in the king's service without rising above the rank of a common cavalleiro.

"There is one more matter to discuss before we adjourn," said Dom Luiz, when the choice of officers had been decided. "I will not allow Dom Vicente d'Alvarez da Saldanha to have anything more to do with the defence of the city. A man who has his

palanquin put under cover and tries to command his men from there is worse than useless; he endangers the safety of the whole garrison. Yet if we do not find him some position or other, we shall get orders from Lisbon to put him into some post where he will do even more harm than he does at present. Cannot you find him a post, Senhor Aveador?"

The Chief Magistrate smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"Your Excellency must be aware that in order to ensure that candidates for judicial posts are men of standing it is usual for them to deposit ——"

"For them to buy the appointment. You may as well say so at once," interrupted Dom Luiz. "Well, I suppose I can say nothing so long as your salary remains unpaid. But can you suggest no way of getting rid of him?"

"Why not send him to Barreto?"

"He won't go. I offered him command of the reinforcements, and he refused it."

"Perhaps I might suggest a way," said the Archbishop. "Your Excellency will remember your anxiety to provide for Dona Beatriz, whose father died last year, leaving no provision for her. She has now reached marriageable age, and I propose that your Excellency should confer upon her prospective husband the captaincy of the garrison that Francisco Barreto has been commanded to establish at Sena. The command of these garrisons is exceedingly profitable, if we may judge from

Sofala, the last captain of which acquired a sum of no less than 100,000 cruzados during the three years of his office. If we whisper that into Dom Vicente's ear, and tell him that Dona Beatriz's husband has been dowered with the captaincy of Sena, I think there is little doubt but that he would ask permission to sail in the same ship that carries her to Africa, and the girl is unlikely to question any arrangement you may make on her behalf."

"But she cannot sail alone in a ship full of men."

"Senhor Ribeiro is to sail with the reinforcements, to take up an appointment at Mozambique. His wife and son will be on board."

The Viceroy sent a messenger to summon Dona Beatriz to the Council Chamber. When she came, he offered her a seat at his side, and bluntly told her of the Archbishop's proposals. The girl looked nervously from one to another of the men around her. They were practically strangers to her, for, like all Portuguese ladies in Goa at that period, she had been kept in a seclusion little less rigid than that of a zenana. Twice she opened her mouth to speak, and twice she scanned the faces of the councillors as if mutely appealing for help, advice, or even sympathy in her lonely position. At last she turned and appealed to Dom Luiz.

"Ah, sir, how can I answer? How can I know what is best? How can I decide — I, who have neither father nor mother to guide me? Sir, you knew my father. You and he fought side by side a score of times. He loved you, and I believe you

loved him. Be a father to me in this matter. Advise me as you would your own daughter, and if you say that I must marry this man, I will obey you."

Dom Luiz sat in thought for a while, stroking his beard and looking at the girl's pleading face. He was a bachelor, and more accustomed to deal with matters of State or military tactics than with family affairs. As he judged all men by their loyalty or disloyalty, their fitness or unfitness for their office, he had no feeling towards Dom Vicente except contempt for his cowardice and incapacity. For all he knew, the man might make an excellent husband—he had never considered what qualities were desirable in a husband from a wife's point of view.

"I know this: Goa is no place for an unmarried woman," he said at last, "and if I sent you home to Portugal, it would be to a nunnery. There are so many women there, and so few men, that a portionless girl stands little chance of marriage unless she were to marry a negro slave, as the peasant women do. Still, I would force no daughter of mine to marry against her will. If Dom Vicente sails in the same ship with you to Mozambique, you will have ample opportunity to make up your mind. If when you get there you have decided to accept his suit, the captaincy of Sena shall be yours. If, on the other hand, you prefer to go on to Portugal to a nunnery, ask Francisco Barreto to arrange a passage for you. He is as good a fellow as ever stormed a bastion, and will help you for your father's sake. Will that do?"

"I will go," said Dona Beatriz, rising to leave the room; "but I would ask this favor. Let my confessor, Father Sebastian, accompany me. He told me only this morning that he wishes to sail with this expedition, and asked me to speak a word for him. He desires to work in the field consecrated by Father Gonzalo's blood."

"Father Sebastian!" cried Dom Luiz to the Archbishop, when the girl had left the hall, "why surely that is the mad Dominican friar that broke in on us the other day and denounced us all, you especially, saying that you thought more about filling your purse and your stomach than about converting the heathen."

"I remember that he compared Goa to Sodom and Gomorrah," retorted the Archbishop, "and said that it was impossible to spread the Gospel among heathen whose spirits were broken by injustice, extortion and robbery, and who had such an example before their eyes as that set by your soldiers. Let him go, your Excellency. We have enough troubles in Goa without having to deal with fanatics."

"Why then, by my word, we have done an excellent morning's work," said the Viceroy, rising and buckling on his sword. "We have rid ourselves of this mad friar. We have emptied the prisons of the men that were eating food badly needed by the soldiers. We have got rid of a score of useless cavalleiros. We have, I think, solved the question of what to do with Dom Vicente, and the only good man we have lost is Senhor Ramires, who sails as

second in command, and I don't grudge him his promotion, for he earned it years ago. I would willingly find supplies for a mad expedition like this one of Barreto's every year at the same price. Come, gentlemen, I must to the walls again. Senhor Aveador, as soon as the men sentenced to the conquest of Monomatapa are embarked, release all your other prisoners and send them to reinforce the men at the walls. Send the jailers also. *A Deus*, Senhors.

"But the Nour Jehan," interrupted the Archbishop. "Will you not take some steps to recover it? I'll warrant that a turn or two of the rack —"

"Bah! He hasn't got the jewel," replied the Viceroy impatiently. "The story was trumped up because he would not grease the palms of every underling who begged from him. Do you suppose that the captain of Ormuz would not have found the jewel if he had had it? The man's a gallant fellow, whether he's a heretic or not, and I'll save him from your clutches. Torture some of your fat monks if you want some sport."

And with this blasphemous suggestion Dom Luiz buckled on his sword and strode out of the hall.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH JOHN TEMPLE SEEKS TO TURN THE
TABLES ON HIS CAPTORS

THREE days afterwards the galleon — *Sao Raphael* — sailed for Mozambique, carrying for Barreto's African expedition such scanty supply of provisions as the Goanese Government could grudgingly spare, the guns and baggage animals that it did not need, and a number of men that it was heartily glad to get rid of.

A fortnight later the galleon lay becalmed on the equator. As she floated there, heaving listlessly on the long, slow swell in the centre of an oily circle of garbage that had been flung overboard during the last two days, she was typical of the stagnation into which Portugal's stupendous enterprises had already drifted. The galleon herself was rotten from worm-eaten mast to weed-fringed keel, for she had been long in Eastern waters, and whenever she had been ordered into port to be careened and refitted the contractors employed to carry out the work had found it cheaper to bribe officials than to do their duty effectively. The man chosen by Dom Luiz to command her was plethoric, ignorant, incapable, and

so enfeebled by laziness and self-indulgence that he was physically unfit for any form of exertion. The Italian pilot who navigated her, the Dutch skipper who sailed her, and the German master gunner who shifted the guns as the ship put about, were all so soured by the injustice of their alien employers that, had not their own lives been concerned, they would scarcely have cared had she never reached port. The sailors who handled the rigging were sullen and insubordinate. The slaves who swabbed the decks were listless and apathetic.

Of the *Sao Raphael's* passengers, the convicts who had been sentenced to the conquest of Monomatapa frankly hoped that the expedition would fail and set them free to follow once more their own devices, and the volunteer cavalleiros, though they proudly called themselves "conquistadores," thought less of the honour of serving in as gallant an enterprise as any that Portugal had undertaken than of the chances the expedition might afford them for plunder and self-advancement.

No work was being done on board. The slaves and Arab seamen, taken for the most part out of captured dhows, having made a perfunctory show of cleaning out the stalls in which the baggage animals were stabled, were lying asleep among the cockroaches on the lower deck. The Portuguese sailors and convicts lay or sat in groups wherever the swaying sails cast tiny patches of shade. Some of them moved restlessly every few minutes in futile search for a spot where they might feel some

movement in the sluggish air. Some, drugged with Indian narcotics, sprawled on the hatches, heedless of the sun that blazed pitilessly down on them. Some quarrelled half-heartedly, from sheer lack of anything better to do, and some few, sitting in a group on the fore-peak, discussed in eager whispers the possibilities of following the example of some of their fellow-countrymen by seizing the ship and turning pirate.

In a cabin under the poop that, in spite of a burning stick of incense that fumigated the air, was heavy with the smells that rose from the camels and the bilges, sat the captain, Dom Balthazar d'Elvas. He was alone. Perhaps from churlishness, perhaps from greed—for he was solacing his solitude by stolidly munchingsickly Indian sweetmeats—perhaps from policy on the ground that the less his officers saw of him the less likely they would be to despise him, he preferred sitting gasping and sweating in his stifling cabin to mingling with the cavalleiros under the shelter of the tattered awning that shaded the poop.

These cavalleiros were amusing themselves as best they could. Some watched a shark that nosed among the garbage alongside. Some paid listless compliments to Senhora Ribeiro and Dona Beatriz, the only two ladies on board. Some played with Senhora Ribeiro's ten-year-old son. A few gathered round the grey-haired lieutenant, Henrique Ramires, and coaxed him to give them hints from his long experience on tactics and strategy and to tell them

anecdotes of the heroic defence of Diu, when delicate Portuguese ladies laboured with mattock and spade to repair the breaches in the bastions while their husbands served the guns.

Apart from the others the Dominican Friar, Father Sebastian, probably the only man on board who was contented with his lot, sat reading a well-thumbed copy of St. Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologia," and uttering many a half-articulate prayer that his Master would find work for him to do in the unknown land for which he was bound.

The men grouped round Ramires were coaxing him to tell them the particulars of an incident told of his own gallantry at the siege of Diu—though wounded in three places he had left the surgeon who was attending him, and, taking his sword in his left hand (his right arm was broken), run back to the walls to join in repelling a sudden attack and fought there for a long hour before retiring to have his wounds dressed—and the lieutenant was modestly trying to turn the conversation into another channel, when John Temple mounted the stairs that led up from the main deck, a bottle of wine in his hand, threaded his way through the groups of cavalleiros and entered a cabin that opened on to the poop deck.

"What is that fellow doing abaft the mainmast?" grumbled one of the young men. "Why don't they make him keep to his place among the convicts?"

"I ordered him off the poop the other day," said another, "and he had the impudence to pretend that he did not understand me. Ever since we

sailed he has been in and out of the pilot's and master-gunner's cabins as if he were a free volunteer. The fact is that he brought a store of wine with him from Goa, the Viceroy having given orders that the money taken from him should be restored, and so long as it lasts the warrant officers will befriend him."

"Why shouldn't they?" answered Ramires. "The poor fellow is a fidalgo in his own country, I believe, but he does any work that I set him to willingly enough. If he prefers the society of warrant officers to that of the rabble yonder, that is his affair and theirs, not ours."

Temple understood or guessed what was being said about him, but took no notice. He had learned, especially since wandering in the Levant, that the position accorded to a man is often very much that which he claims, and having to start life afresh did not intend to handicap his career by too much humility.

"Hulloa, comrade," he said, as he entered the pilot's cabin, "I've brought a draught to cool your throat, *vinho tinto*, the only good thing, I'll swear, that ever came out of Portugal."

The Italian sat up and uttered a string of venomous oaths, cursing Portugal, the Portuguese, and everything belonging to them.

"Listen, senhor," he said as he helped himself to Temple's wine. "Seven years ago I was hired to navigate a galleon from Lisbon to Goa. Less than half my wages were paid and when I asked for

what was still due to me they threatened to cast me into the galleys. I asked to be sent back to Europe, and they told me that none could leave India without the Viceroy's passport, which was never given to foreigners. Dog and sons of dogs! There were some Almaines and Netherlanders that made the voyage with me, who being abused when they demanded their wages went over to the Moors and are casting cannon for Adil Shah at this very day. Had I not a wife in Venice, I would have joined them. Were it not that a pilot can do a little trade at the ports he calls at, I should have starved long since, for to get employment at all I have to pay more in bribes than ever I get in wages. Even to go on this accursed voyage I had to pay thirty cruzados to that fat pig who sits stuffing himself in his cabin all day. May I burst if they do not some day regret the trick they played me!"

"And this fat captain of ours — I suppose he knows no more how to navigate a ship than I do?" suggested Temple, sympathetically.

"Not he, nor any one on board save the Dutch skipper and myself. Without us two all on board would rot before they ever saw land again."

Temple sipped his wine for awhile and examined a chart, adorned with wonderful pictures of whales, porpoises and sea-monsters, that hung from the wall.

"Did you ever hear of the gallant trick that a countryman of mine played on the Moors?" he asked presently. "He was master of a ship that traded to Constantinople, and was taken on the high seas by

Moorish pirates. He was carried to Alexandria, and sold in the open market to another pirate. Now this pirate knew nothing of navigation and because the Englishman was a skilful pilot he employed him to find the galley's position day by day and give the helmsman his course. After three years in slavery the Englishman was told to navigate the galley to Tangiers, but instead of putting in there he turned northwards, having passed the Strait of Gibraltar by night, telling every manner of lie to account for the length of the voyage, and before the pirates suspected anything they woke one morning to find the galley at anchor in Falmouth harbour, the Englishman swum ashore, and the Port Admiral's ship coming up alongside."

The pilot was silent and Temple continued his examination of the charts.

"It's farther from here to Europe than it is from Alexandria to Falmouth," said the former after a long pause.

"But if the pilot, the skipper and the master-gunner are determined to go there, and are backed by a hundred and fifty sturdy convicts, who I'll wager would rather beg in Europe than fight in Africa! Who knows how to navigate this ship? Only yourself and the Dutchman, who has no more cause to love the Portuguese than yourself. Who is it that has the most power on board if he chose to use it? That fat captain, who never shows his face on deck, or the man who has charge of the guns? Do you think the German is not as anxious to see

his home as you are? Look you! If the master-gunner were to load a couple of pieces and point their muzzles sternwards, he would have the poop at his mercy, and all on it would have to dance to any tune he liked to play."

"We should die of thirst before we covered half the distance," objected the pilot thoughtfully.

"Is there no harbour at the Cape where you could take on all the water you wanted? What else do you lack — provisions, arms, ammunition? You have them all under hatches. How would you get rid of the ship? Cast her away on the coast of France, or, better still, take her to one of the northern ports, where you could find any number of honest merchants glad to buy her from you and ask no questions."

The pilot was silent. Temple stood up and laid his finger on the chart.

"Is this where we are?" he asked, pointing to the westernmost of a line of tiny dots that the pilot had made in red ink on the chart.

The pilot nodded.

"Well, then. This I take it is the course we are on." Temple drew his finger across the chart in a west-south-westerly direction. "The course to the Cape would be so" — his finger travelled south-south-west. "If you altered her course from this to that I'll swear no landsman on board would know it, and before any questions were asked we should be half-way to the Cape, and if by that time the convicts were not ready to stand by you at a

given signal, they are not the men I take them for."

"Who would win over the convicts?" objected the pilot. "The lieutenant is as sharp as a rat, and if he saw me talking to them I should finish the voyage with irons on my ankles."

"That would be my part. My place is with the convicts. Look you, senhor. If you are content to live out the rest of your life in these waters without honour or pay, say nothing and there's no harm done. If you are the man to strike a blow for freedom and for your wife and children, and I know you are or I would not have opened my mouth, alter the ship's course and leave the rest to me. If the plot fails, you can turn the ship round and head her back to Mozambique and no one but the Dutchman will know you were ever off your course. Give me a hint only and I will undertake to win over the men. You need not fear to land in Europe empty-handed either. Though I am a penniless prisoner now I am a man of substance in my own country, and I pledge you my word that within two days of my landing in England I will pay a thousand crowns into your hand. Think it over, senhor."

Temple left the Italian deep in thought, and soon afterwards, with another bottle of wine in his hand, made his way to the master-gunner's quarters. With very little difficulty he betrayed the choleric German into expressions of ill-will towards the Portuguese even more vehement than those of the

Italian, after which he led the conversation into a channel very similar to that which had taken place in the pilot's cabin.

An hour later, after providing himself with another bottle of wine, Temple betook himself to the skipper's cabin. The Dutchman's reserve was perhaps more difficult to penetrate than that of the Italian and the German, his intellect duller or his disposition more cautious. Whatever the cause, Temple's interview with this man was much longer than those he had had with the pilot and the master-gunner, and more than once he left the cabin to fetch a further supply of wine. At last, an hour or so after nightfall, the two men came out of the cabin on to the deserted poop. The skipper looked up and down the deck, over the poop railing and aloft, then pulling Temple by the sleeve, whispered hoarsely in his ear —

“Now you go forward, my friend, and do your business with the men, and I will go and have some talk with the pilot. Stay. We must have a password” — he looked round once more — “we will say a ‘Bloody death to the King of Portugal,’ eh? Good lad! now do your part and I will do mine.”

Temple made his way forward to where his fellow-convicts lay asleep on the hatches and the main deck. He groped and stumbled among these, closely scanning the face of each sleeper, and at last stooped and shook the shoulder of a burly mulatto, who lay, his head pillowed on a gun-carriage, some little distance from his fellows.

"Jorge," he whispered. "Jorge; sit up and talk."

The sleeper woke with a snort, drew a knife with one hand and with the other clutched a flagon that stood beside him.

"I don't want to steal your muddy water," said Temple, with a laugh. "I want to talk."

"Isn't the whole weary day long enough to talk in, curse you! Let me sleep and forget," growled the other, sheathing his knife, but still clutching his cherished flagon. The ration of slimy malodorous water issued each day to the convicts and seamen scarcely sufficed in the tropics to do more than tantalize their thirst, for which reason those who had drunk their allowance during the day often prowled about at night looking for a chance to steal that of their more thrifty companions. Determined to run no risks, Jorge drained his flagon, and with a forcibly expressed request to be left alone lay down to sleep again.

For some time Temple searched among the sleeping figures, but not finding any one awake and having no desire to feel a knife in his ribs, made his way aft again. With the exception of the helmsman, who lay snoring beside the tiller, the after decks were deserted, for the cavalleiros had retired to the main cabin and were sitting over their wine. Temple mounted the companion ladder to the poop, walked softly across to the stern railings and looked over. Like most ships of that period, the *Sao Raphael* had a narrow gallery attached to the ship's

side, overhanging the water and running round the after part of the ship from the stern to the break of the poop. It could be reached only through the cabins under the poop, and was used as a promenade by the superior officers of the ship and the passengers who had their quarters aft. As it was on a level with the main deck those on the poop could easily look down into the gallery, but those in the gallery could not see any one above them without craning their heads upwards.

The gallery had only one occupant. In a patch of deep shadow, leaning on the gallery railing and watching the phosphorescent sparks that eddied round the rudder, stood the girl for whom Dom Luiz and his council had arranged a marriage with less care and thought than they would have given to the purchase of a horse or the appointment of a gunner.

"Dona Beatriz," muttered Temple to himself. "The girl I saw in the courtyard of the Viceroy's palace. I forgot about her." He sat down on a bollard and ran his fingers through his hair. "Here's the devil to pay," he muttered again. "I forgot about her."

Temple had come on to the poop to sleep. He had no recognized quarters, and, disliking the smell both of the camels and of the unwashed convicts that crowded the main deck, saw no reason why he should not sleep at night on the deck that during the day was reserved for the cavalleiros. It was a hot night, and as, even had he wanted it,

he had no bedding, his preparations for the night were simple. The slack end of a rope hung coiled on a belaying-pin at the corner of the poop. Temple lifted it on to the deck to serve him for a pillow, lay down, loosened his belt, and settled himself to sleep.

All was quiet on board. The becalmed ship rolled from side to side so slowly that Temple would not have known she moved at all if he had not seen the stars disappear and reappear as the tall masts swung steadily backwards and forwards across the sky. Now and again a horse stamped and shook its halter, a camel grunted, or one of the convicts lying on the dewy deck tossed restlessly in his sleep. Occasionally the voices of those in the cabin were raised in a laugh, a boast, or an argument, but for the most part nothing could be heard but the monotonous creaking of the swaying rudder or the dull thud with which the drooping sails struck the masts as the vessel rolled.

Presently Temple heard the door that connected the main cabin with the gallery open. A man stumbled out and lurched against the railing. He roused himself to listen, partly from mere curiosity, for drunkenness was an uncommon vice among the Portuguese, principally because in the desperate game he hoped to play it was important for him to know as much as possible of what went on among those who had their quarters aft.

"Ah! Dona Beatriz," he heard the man say, "well met, sweet lady. It is seldom in this crowded

ship that we can enjoy each other's society undisturbed. Now happily my gallant companions have dispersed to sleep, so you and I need not fear interruption. What were you doing? Looking at the stars? There are brighter stars in your own fair face! Come! Don't turn away. Let me see your face and I shall neither know nor care whether the stars shine or not."

"Let me pass, if you please, Dom Vicente," replied the girl coldly. "I wish to rejoin Senhora Ribeiro."

"You would not be so cruel to one who adores you!" Dom Vicente lurched a step nearer. "Bah! I know women and their pretty humours. You would lure me on by affecting to hold aloof. Shame on you for a coquette! Such conduct is well enough for a child, but one who is shortly to be my wife might surely be more gracious. Be not so cruel. I thirst for your kisses. I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep for love of you."

Dom Vicente hiccupped solemnly and steadied himself with one hand on the railing.

"Come, sweetheart," he continued. "Have done with trifling. Let us enjoy the hours the kind gods have given us. Why should we wait for an old priest to mumble prayers over us? Let me quench my thirst——"

He reeled towards her. Dona Beatriz sprang back a couple of paces, then turned and faced him.

"Stand back, Dom Vicente," she said with such steady dignity that for the moment he obeyed her. Temple on the poop above strained his ears to catch

every word. "Listen. A fortnight ago in my perplexity I agreed, before I had ever seen you, to regard you as my future husband. Since then I have more and more doubted if any misery would not be better than to be your wife. To-night I have made up my mind, and I tell you this, that I will never marry you. When we reach Mozambique I shall demand Francisco Barreto's protection and entreat him to send me home to Portugal. Let me go, senhor."

Temple rose to his feet and peered cautiously over the side.

"Demand Barreto's protection! You will very soon learn that a commoner like him dances to whatever tune Dom Vicented'Alvarez da Saldanha chooses to play! For that piece of insolence you shall beg me on your knees to marry you. Do you think I have not tamed a score of such pretty birds as you? By the saints, I'll trifle no longer——"

He lurched towards her. Dona Beatriz ran back as far as the gallery would allow her, then turned and faced Dom Vicente, panting and desperate, clutching the railing as if prepared to fling herself overboard. A sudden impulse seized Temple. Picking up a heavy coil of rope on which he had pillowed his head he dropped it neatly on to Dom Vicente's head and shoulders as he passed beneath. The tipsy libertine fell face downwards, and Dona Beatriz, too agitated to know or care whence her deliverance had come, stumbled over his prostrate body and rushed to her cabin.

Temple peered over at the prostrate figure.

"Too drunk to know what hit him, I expect," he commented, "but if he comes up here to find out I'll heave him overboard."

He hauled up the rope, laid it on the deck and again lay down.

"The girl and I are quits now," he thought, as he settled himself to sleep. "She was good to me and now I've done her a good turn. I'll do her another, too, if we take the ship, for I'll take her out of the power of that devil, anyway, whatever happens afterwards."

Towards morning Temple was awakened by the shrill call of the boatswain's whistle. A breeze had sprung up and the sailors had been aroused to trim the sails. As the *Sao Raphael* gathered way the pilot stepped out of his cabin and approached the man at the wheel.

"Make it south-south-west," he commanded.

"South-south-west it is, senhor," responded the helmsman.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH THE CONSPIRACY RIPENS TOO SOON

THE *Sao Raphael* took a weary time to cross the Doldrums. Sometimes a fitful breeze sprang up and died away before the heavy sails could be trimmed to meet it. Sometimes the ship lay idle for days together, unable to move out of the circle of floating refuse that accumulated around her. Several times each day a heavy rainstorm, that blotted out sea and sky as if a shimmering grey pall enveloped the ship, broke overhead with a roar that stifled every other sound. When it passed, and the hot sun broke through the clouds, the streaming decks and rotten timbers sent up foul stifling vapours, that reeked of garbage, bilgewater, and all the mingled odours of an ill-cleaned, overcrowded, vermin-infested hulk. Heat and moisture combined to cover the sides of every cabin, galley, locker, and hold with green-grey mould, to rot the stores of ill-preserved provisions, and to spread pestilence among the crew.

“Our flesh and fishe stanke, our Bisket moulded, our Beere sowred, our water stanke, and our butter become as thin as oyle, whereby divers of our men fell sicke of swollen legges, sore bellies, and other

diseases, and many of them died," wrote one who crossed the Indian Ocean in a Portuguese ship some nine years later. So it was with the crew of the *Sao Raphael*. Suffocating heat, constant drenching, discomfort, mouldy food, and insufficient water, sowed the seeds of dysentery and scurvy among the sailors and convicts with such fatal effect that scarcely a day passed but Father Sebastian was called upon to consign one or more of their number to the deep.

John Temple took full advantage of the misery of his fellows. To men who could not move without agony on account of the sores that had broken out all over their bodies, yet in their misery roused themselves to fight for the scanty ration of slimy green water that was doled out every day, he spoke of the barrels of good wine that the officers had stored in the afterhold. To men whose gums were black and swollen, so that they could scarcely eat the hard beef and harder biscuit issued to them, he whispered that the steward's locker contained a store of honey, raisins, and prunes, placed on board by the King's regulations for the use of the sick, but reserved by the captain for his own enjoyment. To the Europeans on the lower deck he talked of the injustice that all the toil, the danger and the hardship of Portugal's conquests should fall on the common people, while the plunder and fame fell to the officers alone. He mingled with the slaves, too, and talking in the corrupt Arabic that he had picked up on the caravan routes of the Levant, hinted that if mutiny broke out and the power were wrested from

the ship's officers all the slaves on board would share with the mutineers in whatever advantages the mutiny brought. So skilfully did he work on the passions, the greed, the ignorance, and the hate of all, that before the *Sao Raphael's* sails swelled to the southern monsoon discontent and hate smouldered so fiercely among the wretched convicts and seamen that he could scarcely keep it from bursting prematurely into reckless ungovernable mutiny.

Were the mutiny to break out too soon it would completely ruin his plans, for he soon found that few of the mutineers would agree that the ship should be carried to any European port.

"When we have taken the ship, what then?" demanded one conspirator during a midnight discussion on the forehatch.

"We might sail her back to Europe," answered Temple, pretending to be considering the matter in all its bearings. "If we flew the French flag none would question us — half the pirates out of Scotland use it — and we could sell her in one of the northern ports and go ashore with full purses."

There was a murmur of vehement dissent.

"And what when the money was spent?" demanded a swarthy convict. "We should be back in a Portuguese prison within the year."

"We might make for the Red Sea," suggested another; "the Turkish corsairs pay good wages, I've heard."

"Until you cross them," retorted a third, "and then they put you to lug at an oar with a black

galley master to flog you till you die. No, senhors. Let us turn her head eastwards for the Spice Islands, where we could take our pick of a dozen harbours that the Viceroy's fleet would never find. I heard of them only last year from one of the men who joined Captain Diogo Lopez, the captain of Malacca, when he turned pirate after being ousted from his command. The fool might have been there now if he had not tried to make his way back to Portugal as soon as his purse was full. Any man who liked could take service with one of the island rajahs, and have a house among palm trees on the beach, where the sea-breeze blows all day, and his pick of wives and slaves. That's better than being a galley slave among the Turks, or starving in a European prison."

There was a murmur of approval. "Let it be the Spice Islands," said one conspirator after another; and Temple, who could cheerfully have murdered the man who suggested it, was obliged to feign enthusiastic approval of the decision.

The Englishman was now in a position of great difficulty. If the mutiny broke out too soon, dissension would follow as to the course to be adopted next, and whatever plan was decided on it would for a certainty bring him no nearer England. On the other hand, if he let the pilot and the master know that the mutineers would not agree to sail for Europe, these men would save themselves by putting the ship once more on her course for Mozambique. He resolved, therefore, on a bold and complex scheme: to keep his own counsel, to restrain the

men from mutiny till Cape Agulhas was sighted, then to put ashore all the officers and cavalleiros who would not join the mutineers, take in water, throw the camels, horses, and asses overboard, and call a council to decide on plans for the future. If he could persuade the mutineers to abandon the project of making for the Spice Islands and agree to steer for the Red Sea, there would be a slender chance — and the slenderness of the chance gave him many a sleepless night — of taking advantage of the general ignorance of geography, to head the ship north-west instead of north-east and reach some European port before the suspicions of the mutineers were aroused.

Day by day the *Sao Raphael* drew southwards. If any one of those in the cabin thought that the voyage was unduly long or the air cooler than it should be, none showed any signs of misgiving. The hopes of the conspirators, especially of those four who alone knew that the ship was off her course, rose as each succeeding nightfall showed the Southern Cross higher in the sky. At last, some two months after the night on which the conspiracy had first been hatched, the pilot whispered to Temple that, given fair winds, after another fortnight's sailing the sight of Cape Agulhas would give the signal for the long-pent mutiny.

Matters were not to go so smoothly, however. Soon after passing the influence of the steady monsoons, the wind fell till the *Sao Raphael* once more fell becalmed. Under other circumstances inaction would merely have produced the usual crop of

peevish bickerings. Now, it gave men opportunity to gather together and ask each other why they should not strike the blow at once. Suspense and the tantalizing postponement both of the liberty that seemed within their reach and the revenge for which they thirsted, so chafed the convicts that Temple could hardly restrain them from breaking out at once into unorganized mutiny.

He lost control of them on the fourth day of the calm. At noon, when the men mustered aft at the break of the poop to receive their daily rations, the lieutenant, Henrique Ramires, came to the head of the companion ladder and announced that as the supply of water was falling low only half the usual allowance would be issued each day till they sighted land.

For a full minute no man spoke. The men stood in groups, motionless, as if by speaking or moving they would be meekly yielding to this final tyranny. The lieutenant stood on the poop above them quietly waiting to see that each man received his fair share, for a few days previously the distribution of rations had been made the occasion of a free fight.

The steward knocked the head off a water-cask, then stood looking first at the crowd of sailors and convicts, then at Ramires, as if half expecting an order. Suddenly a hoarse snarling voice from among the crowd broke the silence.

"Give us wine, then. There's wine enough on board. Give us wine."

A low murmur passed through the crowd as each man muttered some word of comment, warning, or encouragement to his neighbour. Then the murmurs grew into a roar as each man, taking courage from his fellows, joined in the shout.

"Wine! Give us wine!" they shouted.

Temple, who had been lounging against the mainmast when the trouble began, wormed his way in and out among the crowd, in a low voice urging the men to keep calm; but if any heard him they took no notice. Every man in the crowd, even the Arab slaves who had no idea what the uproar was about or what the word meant, joined in bawling, "Wine, wine, wine!"

Ramires waited till there was a lull in the uproar, then turned to one of the cavalleiros whom the noise had brought crowding to the poop railing.

"Have the kindness to summon the master-gunner," he said quietly. Then facing the crowd again he called to the steward, "Issue the half-ration of water."

Before the steward could dip his measure in the cask the man who had first raised the cry for wine seized it by the rim and with a heave upset it. A score of men flung themselves face downwards on the deck, eager to swill a little of the slimy fluid before it was wasted, but the more resolute stood still.

"At your service, Senhor Ramires," said the master-gunner, emerging from his cabin.

The lieutenant pointed to the man who had upset the cask.

“Put that man in irons and march the convicts below.”

When not required to work the guns or to run them out and in, so as to trim the ship when she tacked, the gunners' duties were to act as sentries over the store-rooms and preserve discipline among the convicts. The master-gunner slowly descended the companion ladder, calling to his men to fall in, but as soon as his foot touched the main deck he ran to the sternmost starboard gun, threw off the lanyard that held it in place, then, calling to his men to help, ran it inboard and trailed its muzzle to command the stern cabin. It was the signal for general action. As one man after another realized that the long-looked-for moment had come when a blow was to be struck for liberty, each one, wretched convict, or scarcely less wretched seaman, seized some weapon — handspike, marline-spike, or belaying-pin — that would give weight to a blow. The gunners loaded the cannon with ammunition hastily brought from some hiding-place down below. The slaves, realizing that a fight was impending, twisted the skirts of their long robes round their loins and drew their knives. The sick hauled themselves painfully out of the way on to the hatch or into the rigging, and Temple drew out of the crowd and tried to think.

The occupants of the main cabin, aroused by the noise from their midday siesta, had gathered into a group by the lieutenant's side. He stood at ease, his feet wide apart, his hands clasped behind his

back, looking down on the mutineers as calmly as if a mutiny were a perfectly commonplace feature of military drill which it was his duty to superintend, but of which he had long since grown weary.

"Who is here?" he said, turning to the group beside him. "Ah, Dom Vicente, oblige me by conveying the ladies to a place of safety below. Senhor de Brito, present my compliments to Captain Balthazar, and ask him to have the condescension to come here, then bid every gentleman arm himself and come on deck. The rest of you, senhors, line the rail and see that no one gets foothold on the poop."

Meanwhile the cannon had been loaded.

"A match. Pass the word for a match," shouted the master-gunner breathlessly, as he rammed the charge home.

A dozen voices obediently called for a match, but it occurred to no one in particular that he should be the one to fetch it.

"A match. Ten thousand devils! Fetch a match!" shouted the master-gunner again. "You, Joao. In a chest in the corner of the starboard shot-locker. There's some oiled rag there. Twist a match and light it at the cook's galley as you come aft."

Meanwhile the lieutenant's messenger returned.

"Captain Dom Balthazar has locked himself in his cabin, senhor."

Henrique Ramires heaved a sigh of relief.

"So much the better," he grunted scornfully. "Take your place by the larboard gangway. Are

you all placed, gentlemen? Is the starboard gangway guarded? So! Stand a trifle farther apart there, gentlemen. You must leave yourselves room to use your swords. See to it that no man climbs along the bulwarks. All ready? Now, each man stand his ground. Listen, master-gunner! lash that gun in its place again and yield yourself, or you hang within the hour."

For answer the master-gunner stamped his foot and swore again, turning to look along the deck. His messenger had found the rag after some delay, but in his haste had failed to light the match properly. He paused halfway along the deck, puffed at the tiny spark that smouldered on the rag, then turned and ran back to light it again at the cook's galley-fire.

"Draw swords, gentlemen," commanded Ramires. "I give you one more chance to yield, master-gunner."

It was a tense moment. Cavalleiros and mutineers all stood motionless watching for Joao to reappear from the galley. The becalmed ship rolled heavily from side to side in the trough of a deep swell, her cordage creaking and her useless sails slapping the masts with a sounding smack as she rolled. The lookout man had left his station. The steersman had left the idle tiller and climbed on to the stern rail to get a better view. The pilot and the master stood a little way back from where the cavalleiros lined the poop rail, unwilling to join the mutineers till success should be sure. Every one

stood and waited to see what the next moment would bring forth. At last the tardy Joao approached, lighted match in hand. The crowd of mutineers parted to let him pass. The master-gunner seized the match, blew the spark into a bright glow and took a step forward.

"Listen, Senhor Lieutenant," he said slowly. "I have all your lives in the hollow of my hand. It is no shame for you to yield. Choose now. I offer you an equal share in our councils if you will throw your sword into the sea and join us down here. As for us, we are tired of a service in which we have all the toil, all the hardship, all the danger, and none of the reward. Who should know it better than yourself, you who have grown white-bearded doing the work of a colonel with an ensign's rank and pay, while pimps and courtiers stepped over your head? Join us, senhor, or ——"

He held the match close to the touch-hole of the cannon and looked at the lieutenant.

"Keep your stations, cavalleiros!" shouted Ramires, throwing up the point of his sword and jumping outwards and downwards on to the deck below. He lighted almost at the master-gunner's feet and lunged forwards, but failing to allow for the heaving of the deck he swayed, staggered, and fell sideways, the point of his sword passing harmlessly through the German's tunic.

"Rush the poop, lads," shouted the master-gunner, placing his foot on the lieutenant's chest and drawing a knife.

"Stand back! By the holy cross, I command you! Stand back and hold your hands!"

The mutineers had surged forward and now reeled back. Father Sebastian, the mad friar, as most of them called him behind his back, wrapt in his own thoughts in some quiet corner of the ship had not till then been aware of the mutiny. No one had seen him approach, but now he interposed his body between the crowd and the companion-ladder, holding aloft the emblem that, half-witted though they thought him, gave him at the last supreme authority over all on board.

"Stand back, lest I excommunicate you all." The friar's usually low and gentle voice rang out loudly and clearly. His thin face was flushed and his eyes flashed with excitement. "Touch but the skirt of my habit, and you insult the cross I bear."

The men crowded sulkily backwards, each one trying to avoid the friar's flashing eyes. The Lutheran gunner, who had paused, knife in hand, to see what had stopped the rush of the mutineers, saw that success seemed likely to be turned into defeat by the power of what he regarded as an idolatrous symbol held by a feeble dotard. Reckless with rage he sprang forward, leaving Ramires unhurt, dashed the crucifix from the friar's hands and felled him to the deck with a blow of his powerful fist.

A gasp of horror went up from the shocked mutineers. Blasphemy polluted their most commonplace utterances, and with many of them murder had been an occasional hazardous but profitable incident,

but sacrilege they regarded as a fearful thing, a thing to be spoken of in whispers, a sin for which there was no pardon either in this world or the next. Many dropped the weapons they had picked up and crossed themselves. All shoved and jostled to get away from the priest as if anxious to dissociate themselves from the German's impious act.

If the cavalleiros on the poop had seized this opportunity to rush down the ladder, they could have driven the mutineers helter-skelter below hatches, but they were young and unused to act boldly in emergencies. They hesitated, consulted each other, remembered that the lieutenant had told them to keep their places, and let the opportunity go by.

All this while Temple had hung back, too bewildered by the rapid rush of events to decide what action he should take. The premature outbreak of the mutiny had ruined his plans. Now a happy inspiration seized him. If he could manage to make the cavalleiros voluntarily submit, it was barely possible that they might form a party strong enough to persuade the mutineers to carry the ship to Europe. Their influence, at any rate, would probably prevent any wanton outrage against the women on board. In another minute all hope of success would be gone, unless he acted promptly. Ramires, half-stunned but still grasping his sword, had risen to his knees. Temple shouldered his way through the crowd of mutineers, threw him on the deck again, and held him there.

“Better a live friend than a dead enemy!” he cried. “Bind his arms, master-gunner.”

They lifted the gallant old soldier to a sitting position, and bound his arms behind his back. The mutineers began to take heart. The Dominican Friar lay senseless, unable to intervene, and no portentous disaster had followed the master-gunner’s act of sacrilege. One man after another picked up the weapon he had dropped. Still the cavalleiros stood passive, nervously fidgeting with their swords, prepared to resist a charge but for want of a leader lacking initiative to leave their appointed stations and rescue the lieutenant. Behind them the Dutch skipper and the Italian pilot, the latter biting his nails and wriggling with anxiety, waiting to see whether the mutiny were to succeed before risking their necks.

“Listen, senhors,” shouted Temple, in broken Portuguese, picking up the match that the master-gunner had dropped and blowing it again into a bright glow. “The guns are in our hands, and among us are the only men who can use them. You are helpless. Those who have not joined us within the next five minutes shall die. Let each man who wishes to live throw his sword into the sea as a sign that he means no treachery, and join us down here. If then he does not choose to throw in his lot with us, sharing equally in our councils and our plunder, he shall be set ashore at some port that is visited by European ships. As for you, Senhor Lieutenant, I pledge you my word, if you yield, to make a better

provision for your old age than you would earn by remaining in the service of the country that has treated you so scurvily. I will count while the ship makes a dozen rolls. If you have not yielded by then, you die. Gentlemen, cavalleiros, at the thirteenth roll of the ship I open fire. No quarter shall be given to any man who is not among us unarmed before then."

Ramires looked up at the poop.

"If any gentleman among you sees his neighbour preparing to turn traitor, let him pass his sword through his foul body," he said calmly.

"One!" shouted Temple, as the *Sao Raphael*, wallowing in the long swell of the Southern Ocean, fell heavily to port.

"Two!" The cordage creaked dismally as the heavy sails swayed to starboard.

"Three!" As the shadow of the mainsail passed across the deck some of the mutineers shuddered and crossed themselves as if some evil spirit were hovering over them.

"Four! Come, senhor," urged Temple. "If you will surrender and bid your cavalleiros surrender, you will save the lives of all on board."

For answer the old soldier spat contemptuously at the Englishman's feet and turned his head away. There was no sign of fear or emotion on his iron face, but suddenly he gave a start and, bound though he was, staggered to his feet.

"Mercy of Heaven! Look!" he cried.

There was need. To the eastward an arc of the

sky was obscured by a cloud so dark that a white sea-bird, flying wailing by, appeared against this sombre background like a patch of snow on a mountain side. Even while they looked the blackness spread outwards and upwards as if unseen hands were drawing a pall across the face of the living world. The sea below it had turned from blue to black, and flakes of white spindrift leapt from wave to wave like water-sprites fleeing before the advancing hurricane.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH THE MUTINEERS AND THEIR MASTERS WORK SIDE BY SIDE

DEATH was striding towards them across the water, for the *Sao Raphael*, every inch of canvas spread and with no way on her, was lying broadside on to the approaching storm, as helpless as a mountaineer in the track of an avalanche. In that moment of common danger mutiny was forgotten. Each man acted instinctively according to his disposition and training. Some fell on their knees and fumbled in their breasts for charms, amulets, or holy relics. Some sprang to stations in answer to the skipper's bellowed order to shorten sail. An Arab slave scrambled on to the poop and flogged the sternpost with a rope's end, shouting to the ship to rouse herself and take heed of the danger. But before a single sail could be lowered the full fury of the tornado was upon them. The *Sao Raphael* shuddered as if in terror as she heeled over before the terrible strain. The port bulwark rose high above their heads. All loose gear began to slide to starboard across the slanting deck.

"Make fast! Make fast!" yelled the master-

gunner. "If the gun gets adrift the devil himself couldn't catch her again." He thrust a handspike between the wheels of the gun-carriage, and his men, dropping their weapons, hastened to secure it.

Still the ship heeled over. The bight of the foresail dipped in the sea and water roared through the starboard scupper holes. Still she heeled. The low forepeak almost disappeared and the deck was awash as far aft as the main-hatch.

"Now, God have mercy on sinners!" cried the pinioned lieutenant as the water touched his feet. As the words were uttered, with a crack that sounded above the roar of wind and rain like the first burst of a thunder peal, the rotten mainmast split from the deck to the cross-trees and fell headlong overside. Relieved of the weight, the *Sao Raphael* leapt sideways and upwards and swung her stern round to the wind. While the sailors hacked at the shrouds with knives and axes to free the ship from the wreckage that banged and dragged at her side, the gunners lashed the cannon in its place again, and the tardy cavalleiros descended from the poop and cut the rope which bound the lieutenant's arms.

"You are under arrest with all your crew, master-gunner," said Ramires, with as much dignity as was possible under circumstances which compelled him to shout into the German's ear, "and if God spares us you shall have your deserts. Meanwhile, stand by your guns in case the master needs to trim the ship. Two of you gentlemen take the

Englishman below to the cells, and see that he has no communication with any one save yourselves."

Dom Vicente meanwhile had discharged his errand with almost superfluous fidelity. He led the ladies below to the purser's store-room, where they would have been perfectly free from danger of being hit even if the mutineers had opened fire on the poop, but not content with this position he conducted them lower and lower till they reached the place, just above the keel, where refractory seamen and convicts were confined. Here he found a tiny cell, pitch dark, swarming with vermin and heavy with stale air and the foul odours of a ship that has reached a rotten old age in tropical seas. Into this he ushered them, and following, closed the door.

"We will not detain you, Dom Vicente," said Dona Beatriz stiffly, when she saw that he did not intend to leave them. "Doubtless the lieutenant will need your help on deck."

Senhora Ribeiro murmured a protest. She did not relish being left in the dark with only a girl and a little boy to keep her company.

"Thanks, dear lady," stammered the craven gallant. "I — the lieutenant — I must be faithful to my trust."

"At least find us a lantern and leave the door open."

"That would betray our hiding-place."

"If there is need of such caution, it would be well to be silent then," rejoined Dona Beatriz, acidly. Soon afterwards she almost wished she had

not commanded silence. Deep down as they were, far below the water line, they hardly heard the noise of the storm or noticed the list when the ship heeled over before it, but as soon as the *Sao Raphael* began to surge through the water weird and hideous noises arose; shrieks that died away in eerie whispers, gasps, groans, mysterious sighs, and sudden terrifying silences. She tried to assure herself that these sounds were due to nothing more uncanny than the lapping and the sucking of the bilge-water, the groaning of the timbers, and the rush of water beneath the ship's keel, sounds which in a far less degree she had heard in her own cabin on deck, but the noise was peculiarly weird, and she lived in a superstitious age. Senhora Ribeiro, still more frightened, felt for her rosary and gasped out prayers between her sobs. Dom Vicente muttered disjointed half-remembered fragments of the *Credo* and *Paternoster*, and the little boy, too young to derive much comfort from religious exercises, began to whimper, till Dona Beatriz groped for his hand, and, forgetting her own fears, set herself to soothe his terror.

Presently the sound of approaching footsteps gave a new cause for fear.

"The mutineers are searching for us. Help me hold fast the door," whispered Dom Vicente hoarsely.

A line of light appeared below the door of the cell. The door of the adjoining cell was flung open. Some one was thrown into it. The door was shut again and bolted, and the footsteps retreated again.

"Who was that?" gasped Senhora Ribeiro.

"Who knows?" answered Dom Vicente, and hurriedly resumed his devotions.

Hour after hour dragged slowly by, and since no one came to seek them, it seemed certain that the mutineers had seized the ship. Dom Vicente gave up trying to remember the Creed, and became silent. Senhora Ribeiro's sobs became less frequent and more subdued. The boy fell asleep, and at last Dona Beatriz, too, fell into an uneasy, fitful stupor.

At some time during the night she awoke with a startled cry. It seemed as if a cold clammy hand had touched her ankle. Putting out her hand, as if to thrust it away, she found that a thin stream of water was trickling through the closed door.

"Wake, wake," she cried, groping for Senhora Ribeiro's shoulder and shaking it. "The ship is sinking! Do you not feel the water? They have forgotten us. Come, let us go on deck. Anything is better than to stay here and drown."

Just then a shout arose from the next cell, followed by a lusty kick on the door.

"Be silent, dear lady, for the love of Heaven, be silent!" wailed Senhora Ribeiro. "If they find us, they will murder us."

"As well be murdered as drowned," retorted Dona Beatriz; then, raising her voice, she shouted, "Who is there!"

"John Temple, the English prisoner," came the angry reply from the next cell. "Let me out! Am I to be left here to drown?"

"The English prisoner!" gasped Dom Vicente, incredulously. Gradually it dawned on his frightened wits that if it was the Englishman who had been flung into the next cell, the mutiny had obviously failed, and, but for his own cowardice, they might have returned long ago to less offensive quarters. The thought braced him like a draught of wine, relieving his fears so greatly that he scarcely realized the new real danger that threatened.

"Take courage, ladies," he said gaily. "The mutineers have been defeated, and I may conduct you in safety to your cabins."

He flung open the door, and led the way out of the cell.

"If you keep your fingers on the bulkhead, you will be able to feel your way along. Be careful. Here is the ladder. Shall I go first, Senhora Ribeiro?"

"But the Englishman? You will not leave him to drown?" protested Dona Beatriz.

"Why not?" rejoined Dom Vicente, climbing the ladder. "He would have shown us little mercy if his devilish designs had succeeded."

Dona Beatriz paused irresolute. Twice she stepped forward to follow the others, and twice stood still again. A lurch of the ship sent a sudden flood of water pouring along the passage that wetted her to the knees. Then she turned and groped her way back to the cell in which Temple was again lustily calling for help.

"Senhor Englishman," she called, "it seems they have forgotten you. If I release you, will you

swear to find out the lieutenant and surrender yourself to him ? ”

The promise was given, and Dona Beatriz, at a cost of considerable damage to her fingers, wrenched back the bolts of the door.

“ Dona Beatriz ! ” cried Temple. “ How come you here ? Pardon me — I am impertinent. Will you lead the way or shall I ? ”

In silence they groped their way along the passages and up the ladders that, after they had lost their way more than once in the darkness, led them into the purser’s storeroom, dimly lighted by a hanging lantern.

“ You will permit me to stay and eat before I surrender myself ? ” he pleaded, ravenously eyeing a pile of mouldy biscuits. “ I have fasted for I know not how many hours. ”

“ As you will. I can leave you now. *A Deus, senhor.* ”

He fell on one knee and raised her hand to his lips, in the courtly fashion of gentlemen of that period.

“ *A Deus e gracias,* ” he replied, and scarcely waiting to bow her out of the room, filled his mouth with biscuit.

When, having satisfied his hunger and his thirst, Temple ascended to the deck, he emerged into darkness as impenetrable as that of his cell had been. He could see neither the masts above, nor the deck below, nor the sea around him. Only a dim formless blur of light showed where a yard or two away

the poop lantern was burning. Suddenly there seemed to burst out of the black void a mass of gleaming silver lit by a myriad sparks of golden light. A wave had curled over the forepeak and in breaking set alight a glowing mass of phosphorus. As the water roared across the deck the masts and the guns, the hatches and men labouring at the pumps, were outlined against the gleaming background more clearly than a tree is revealed by a flash of lightning that darts behind it. The light revealed Father Sebastian standing on the poop by Temple's side.

"God has sent that miracle to remind you of hell fire," thundered the Dominican in his ear. "Repent while there is yet time."

The *Sao Raphael* shook off the brilliant phosphorescent water that poured along her deck and all was black once more. To find the lieutenant, Temple realized, would be no easy thing, nor, if he were found, would it be easy to bawl explanations in his ear. He decided therefore that he might well wait till daylight before redeeming his promise to Dona Beatriz. The sight of men labouring at the pumps had shown him that the ship was in peril. The most sensible thing to do at the moment was to share their labour, for life was still sweet and Temple had that in his possession which might, judiciously used, still win him liberty and wealth. To play the man, moreover, might divert the punishment that hung over him. Having arrived at this decision, he groped his way with difficulty to the nearest pump and took his share of the labour.

Then followed the agony of a seemingly endless nightmare. For hour after hour he laboured, sometimes in pitchy darkness, sometimes waist-deep in water, at a task that allowed no respite. Cold, faint, weary, every muscle aching, his head feeling as if it would drop every time he bent his back across the pump-handle, he toiled with the dogged despairing energy of a galley-slave. Twice during the night Ramires, asking no question, gave him temporary relief by taking his place at the pump while he ate a small fragment of biscuit and drank a little wine which the lieutenant brought to him and his fellow-labourers. Three times he was knocked into the scuppers and dragged himself wearily, bruised and bleeding, back to his work.

At last the day broke pale and wan over the waste of waters, dispelling one of the worst horrors of that awful night. Ramires, who for the last hour had been labouring at a pump with two convicts and an Arab seaman, dropped the pump-handle and looked round the battered deck.

"Where are all the men, pilot?" he shouted. "There's not two score on deck."

The Italian was standing on the poop gloomily watching the procession of the great grey waves, wondering what part of the coast the ship would strike if the gale held and endeavouring to devise a plausible explanation for being so far south.

"Skulking down below most likely, senhor," he replied apathetically, shrugging his shoulders.

Ramires called one or two of the soldiers who

were labouring at the pumps and led them below to search the ship. After a while, like rats ferreted out of their holes, those who had taken advantage of the confusion and the darkness to shirk the cold and the heartbreaking labour of pumping, appeared by twos and threes and relieved the others, who were then sent below to eat and rest. In the stern cabin Ramires found a group of cavalleiros sitting listlessly round the table.

"I must send you gentlemen to the pumps," he said, "till I have mustered all on board, when I will arrange watches and divide the labour."

All obediently left the cabin except Dom Vicente.

"I am not a galley-slave to labour with convicts," he said sullenly when Ramires motioned him to follow them.

"There's no rank on a sinking ship, except that of the ship's officers," answered the lieutenant. "Choose between drowning later on or dying now, for, by the saints, if you don't go forward I'll ——"

He laid his hand on a sword that hung sheathed on the cabin wall. Dom Vicente rose sullenly and went to the cabin door.

"You shall pay for this insolence, senhor," he snarled.

"Oh, begone! Get forward before I kick you," answered the lieutenant angrily. Then he knocked at a door opening on the main cabin. It was opened by Dona Beatriz, who made a pretty picture as, steadying herself with one hand on the bulkhead, she swayed to the motion of the ship.

"Well, ladies, I fear you slept poorly last night," he said gently.

"Are we in danger, senhor?" asked Senhora Ribeiro.

"We are in God's hands," answered the lieutenant simply, laying his hand on the head of the little boy and ruffling his hair. "And you, little one, have you slept?"

"I was afraid because of the dreadful noises, but Dona Beatriz told me beautiful stories of the saints. Must I not go to the pumps with father and the other men?"

"Nay, you must take your father's place by your mother's side and comfort her."

"The captain has been calling for you from his cabin, senhor," said Dona Beatriz.

"When the captain takes his place on deck he will find me there," answered the lieutenant.

"And what can I do!" asked Dona Beatriz.

"Better stay out of harm's way."

She laughed scornfully.

"So did not the women at the siege of Diu. I am a Portuguese and the daughter of a conquistador. Find work for me, or I will go and seek it for myself."

"Come, then, if you can keep your footing. There are men enough with bruises to dress."

Dom Vicente meanwhile had slunk forward and taken his place at a pump, but the very first time a wave rose towering above him he dropped the pump-handle and fell on his knees with a shriek, and on his knees he remained all day, crying and praying

and ransacking his muddled brains for the name of some saint who might perchance pay more attention than the one to whom he had prayed before.

There was one who prayed with greater dignity and more courage. Seeing that the ship, high out of the water though her stern was, was every moment in danger of being pooped by the giant seas that rose behind her, Father Sebastian had taken his place on the poop, and there with uplifted hand solemnly blessed each wave as it rose. The men who laboured at the pumps, when their backs seemed ready to break with fatigue and their hearts with despair, looked up and took courage from the example of the brave old man who, despite the bitter cutting wind that tossed his beard about his ears and spattered him with flying spindrift, never throughout that day left the post he had assigned to himself.

CHAPTER V

THE WRECK OF THE *SAO RAPHAEL*

FOR two days and nights the convicts and the cavalleiros, the seamen and the gunners, with a few short respites for rest and such food as they could obtain, laboured at the pumps. At the end of the third day a new peril arose. The *Sao Raphael* had been running eastwards before the gale under as little sail as possible. Suddenly the wind, that had blown with unabated force since the breaking of the storm, dropped as suddenly as it had arisen. The *Sao Raphael*, deprived of the driving force that had enabled her to keep ahead of the racing seas, slackened her speed and lost way, till a great grey wave overtaking her struck her stern, and almost drove her under. As she lifted, reeling and quivering from the blow, she swung helplessly round, and lay broadside on to the waves.

“God help us! The rudder has gone!” cried the pilot.

It was true. The great wave had lifted the rudder right off the pintles on which it swung, and now it hung banging against the stern post, as useless as the long seaweed that streamed from the keel.

Slowly the ship swung round, and lay wallowing in the trough of the sea, reeling to port till the waves poured in a long green cascade over her bulwarks, reeling to starboard till the foreyard dipped in the seething foam. The heavy rolling sent the men staggering across the steep slippery decks, and the weight of the foremast sloping far out of the perpendicular tugged and jerked at the stays and shrouds till they snapped like rotten packthread.

“We must lighten ship, Senhor Ramires. The guns must go,” shouted the pilot, and a scratch crew of gunners and convicts, under the lieutenant and the master-gunner, watching their opportunity, dropped one after another the heavy guns into the sea. The sailors, meanwhile, led by the Dutch skipper, laboured to replace the broken stays with hawsers, but before the mast could be secured it snapped some five feet above the deck and fell over the side.

Then was their situation pitiable indeed. Without rudder or sail the *Sao Raphael* rolled and wallowed at the mercy of the waves, and a great cry of despair went up from the weary sailors. Some fell on their knees and prayed. Some, mad with terror, tore down from its niche the image of Our Lady Star of the Sea, and kicked it round the deck with foul imprecations and bitter curses. For a moment Father Sebastian stood aghast at the outrage, then, picking up the effigy, he held it aloft and shouted —

“Hearken, men ; God in His great loving

kindness has sent us this peril that we may remember our sins and repent. Join me now, therefore, in prayer and supplication."

He hurried to his cabin, and returned a moment afterwards wearing the full vestments of his rank and order, and carrying a marble crucifix. Then marshalling into line all whom Ramires would allow to leave the pumps, he led them, not without many a fall, in procession round the ship, chanting a litany as he went. When one litany had been chanted, those who had taken part in it relieved those at the pumps, who in their turn walked in procession and chanted responses. Thus passed the night, in labour and prayer, yet the ship sank lower and lower in the water.

At break of day a shout from the poop, "Land, land!" set every man staring westwards, and a feeble cheer arose as the worn-out men saw a long line of foam where the waves broke on a low sandy shore. As the light grew stronger it was seen that the *Sao Raphael* was drifting slowly along the coast on a course roughly parallel with the shore. The seas were less mountainous now, though still running high, and the ship was sufficiently steady to allow a jury mast to be rigged, but the treacherous wind was light and fitful and such sail as could be spread was of little service.

Then followed long hours of suspense, for the current carried them now towards the land, now away from it. Sometimes they could distinguish each branch and leaf of the trees that fringed the

shore ; sometimes the trees melted into a blur as the shore receded. At last the vessel set definitely landwards, and soon after midday the *Sao Raphael* was rolling in broken muddy water, less than half a mile from the beach. Slowly she staggered shorewards. The lead gave six fathoms, then five fathoms, then four. The pilot allowed her to drift another cable's length, then ordered an anchor to be dropped from the bow, and the ship swinging round drifted stern on towards the beach till she grounded not more than a hundred yards from the shore. It was an ingenious manœuvre happily conceived, for the overhanging stern was thus placed to leeward of the ship, and it became fairly easy to reach the boats, as soon as they could be lowered into the water, by a rope ladder hanging from the stern gallery. There was no question whether the ship was to be abandoned or not, for she was already so low in the water that the deck was awash as far aft as the foremast, and now that she was in shallow water she bumped heavily on the bottom with a crash that shook her from stem to stern as each succeeding wave lifted and dropped her.

The admirable custom by which the captain of a sinking ship is the last man to leave her had not arisen at this time, but it is probable that Captain Dom Balthazar d'Elvas might unwittingly have had the honour of initiating it, if the boats had been reached from any part of the ship other than the stern gallery, for it is improbable that those on board, even had they not forgotten his existence during the

last three days, would have concerned themselves for his safety.

He had remained in his cabin throughout the gale, miserable with fear, discomfort, and seasickness, yet plucking up desperate courage to shout for news whenever he heard footsteps in the main cabin. No one had heeded him. He had tacitly renounced command of the ship, and none had had time to devote to the comforting of useless cowards.

The sight of land, however, which he could see from the windows of the cabin when the *Sao Raphael's* stern swung shorewards, roused him to think.

He had as yet no clear idea of what had happened, but since it appeared that the ship had reached its destination, he supposed that the mutiny had failed. Boats had been launched and were being brought round to the stern. Obviously, some one was going ashore. Dom Balthazar determined that he, too, would go ashore at once. As soon as he reached dry land he would, he decided, report himself to the Governor of Mozambique, and then — the thought cheered him immensely — he would take immediate steps to hang all concerned in the mutiny.

He pulled down the barricade that he had piled against his cabin door and stepped out into the stern gallery, where a crowd of men were preparing to descend into the boats. One of these, seeing an opportunity to ingratiate himself with a man who, however incompetent and ignorant, had influence with those in whose hands lay the granting of appointments, stepped forward with a low bow.

"Ah, what a relief! The blessed saints have heard our prayers," murmured the sycophant. "Your Excellency has recovered from your indisposition just in time."

"Just in time," grunted the captain. "Why?"

"The ship is sinking," replied the cavalleiro.

Dom Balthazar did not wait to learn particulars. He hurried back into his cabin and began with feverish haste to ransack his chests, tossing one costly garment after another on to the floor. Doublets of satin, velvet, damask, and cloth of gold, silken shirts, ruffs of cambric, shirts of lawn and silk, velvet caps trimmed with seed pearls, were thrown into an untidy heap, until he found that for which he was looking. At the bottom of one of his chests lay a tray full of glistening jewels, strings of pearls, gold bangles studded with large rubies, rings adorned with uncut diamonds, which, in order to have his property in portable form, Dom Balthazar had bought with the illicit profits derived from three years' successful occupation of the post of Comptroller of Revenue at Calicut.

While he was stuffing these into his wallet and among the loose folds of his clothes, riot broke out on deck. Discovering that boats had been launched, the convicts abandoned the pumps and crowded aft, fighting, cursing, clutching at those who barred their way, trampling on those that fell, infecting the better-disciplined sailors and cavalleiros with their madness, till there was scarcely a man on board who was not fighting to gain a place in the boats. As soon as the

boat that was launched first had been brought under the overhanging stern, men clambered down into it, and, borne down by the weight of those that followed them, tumbled and sprawled in helpless confusion across the thwarts. The sailors who manned it tried to cast off in vain, for the painter was made fast to a ring in the bow of the boat, and this was buried under a heap of writhing men. At last a huge convict, who, fighting a way by sheer strength through the dense crowd in the main cabin, had reached the stern gallery, unable to bear down the last man who barred his way, lifted him bodily in his arms and flung him overboard. The poor wretch turned in the air, pitched on the gunwale of the crowded boat, and capsized it. Some of its occupants sank, some swam to the ship's side and clambered on board again, some tried to climb into the other boats but were beaten off by the sailors who manned them, who, having no mind to drown, clubbed their oars and struck at the heads of the swimmers, or drew their knives and stabbed at the hands that clutched the gunwales.

At this moment occurred the only recorded instance in which Captain Dom Balthazar d'Elvas acted with energy and decision. He had stepped through the door that opened from his cabin on to the stern gallery just in time to witness the swamping of the boat. Returning, he snatched up his sword, and then, helped by his great weight, hacked and hewed a way through the throng, calling to the cavalleiros to clear the gallery. His action turned

the scale in favour of those who had striven to maintain order. Ramires, who had been pent up in a corner of the poop-deck by the rush of convicts, clambered over the stern followed by some of the cavalleiros, and dropped into the gallery by the side of his superior officer. Together they drove the convicts back from the gallery into the main cabin, and, helped by all who realized the madness of disorder, gradually cleared the poop. Most of those who sided with the officers were armed, and the convicts, fighting with empty hands, were, after five minutes' scuffle, driven forward on to the main deck.

“Make a line across the deck, senhors,” cried Ramires, as the last man was driven forward. “Let no man come abaft the mainmast. As for you vermin, if you want to save your worthless lives you had best get back to the pumps. How’s this? What do you here, Englishman? Who released you?”

In the thick of the riot, realizing that there was little chance of his life being saved unless order were restored, Temple had seized a belaying-pin, had wielded it on the side of order and discipline, and in the skirmish had chanced to fight by the lieutenant's side.

“Dona Beatriz Correa da Mattos released me lest I should drown in the hold, pledging me to yield myself to you, but till this moment I have had no opportunity. Accept my submission, senhor.”

"And now you wish to curry favour?"

"Now I wish to save my life."

"And so you shall. Go to the stern gallery, and see that no one enters the boats without permission. If you act faithfully, I will see that you do not hang."

The lieutenant needed some one for the post that he had assigned to Temple, but he believed that there was no one on board who could be trusted not to sneak away into the boats if opportunity offered. Temple's life, however, was forfeit. Even if he reached the shore, he would be hanged sooner or later when order had been restored, unless some one befriended him. Therefore, of all the men on board, he was probably the least unreliable. It was a desperate expedient to trust one who was a foreigner, a convict, and a mutineer, but the occasion was urgent. Ramires turned to see that those who had fought to restore order had taken up the stations assigned to them, and a minute afterwards followed the Englishman to the stern gallery.

"Where is the captain?" he demanded.

"In that boat, senhor," replied Temple, pointing to the second boat, already half-way ashore. "They pushed off before I got here."

"Did he say nothing? Did he leave no orders?"

"None, except that his luggage was to be sent ashore in the next boat."

"May he die of leprosy! May ten thousand devils torment his soul throughout all eternity! Go and tell the ladies to come here. Tell Senhor Ribeiro that he is to accompany his wife, and Dom

Vicente, his betrothed. Call also Father Sebastian and Senhors Dias, da Cunha, de Sousa, de Brito, Furtado, and Ferao. That will be enough for one boat-load."

None of the men who received the lieutenant's message hesitated to accept their good fortune except Father Sebastian. Temple found the old man standing on the main deck, surrounded by a group of kneeling men who were waiting to confess such of their chief sins as they could remember at the moment and receive a hurried absolution at his hands.

"Convey my thanks to Senhor Ramires," said the friar with a smile, "and tell him that the souls of these men are of more value than my poor life. I cannot leave the ship till these sinful children of mine have made their peace with God. Stay, it may be that I shall not reach the shore." He stepped into his cabin and returned carrying his marble crucifix, "Bid the lieutenant send this ashore. It will comfort and help the survivors in this heathen land."

The friar's care for the spiritual needs of his flock most providentially reminded the lieutenant that no one had taken thought for the material needs of the survivors. Hurriedly some bags of biscuit, a couple of arquebuses with ammunition, and, on the pilot's suggestion, an azimuth, an astrolabe, a chart of the East African coast, and a compass, were brought and lowered into the boat.

It was well for those who had gone ashore that

this was done, for before either of the boats returned to the ship a huge wave lifted the *Sao Raphael* and flung her down on the hard shelving bottom with a crash that broke her back. The deck split in a dozen places, the bulwarks bulged and gaped. The ship seemed to crumble away. It sometimes happens that a sudden catastrophe is so novel, so far removed from the range of everyday experience, that it arouses for the moment no emotion more poignant than mild bewilderment. Temple regarded the bursting planks with curious indifference, as if the sight were interesting enough in itself, but one which did not concern him personally. The deck glided from under him and, with puzzled apathy, he saw the green foam-crowned water rising over his head till the grip of death at his throat roused him to fight for air and life. Fiercely he struggled upward till his head rose above the foam. For a moment, as he rose on the crest of a wave, he could see the tree-fringed shore, and men standing waist-deep in broken water, ready to grasp any swimmer they could reach. Then he fell in the trough of the waves and the green mounds of water shut him in on every side. Once a desperate swimmer clutched him and he could read the agony in the wide despairing eyes as he thrust him fiercely away. The arch of a breaking wave curved over and fell on him, thrusting him downwards and forwards till his helpless body bumped on the bottom, then the underwash seized and drew him backwards. Six times a wave lifted him, and gave him a precious moment of breathing

space and hurled him forwards. Six times the savage underwash dragged him back. As for the seventh time he was flung forward he was conscious that a lean tawny figure was struggling towards him. A brown hand clutched his hair. He felt himself dragged through the foam into shallow water. He staggered to his feet, ploughed through the water that reached his waist, his knees, and then his ankles, reached the shore and fell face downwards on soft dry sand.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH JOHN TEMPLE IS ADMITTED TO THE COUNCILS OF THE CAVALLEIROS

“ He came, the famous one from over the sea,
The Stranger.
He came without our seeing him,
The Stranger.
Concealed by the branch of a tree,
The Stranger.
By the branch of a yellow wood tree,
The Stranger.”

*Translation of a native South African song supposed to refer to
the first coming of the Portuguese.*

AT sunrise on the morning after the *Sao Raphael* had been cast ashore, Dabulamanzi, headman of a small native community that had its home, in the year 1571 A.D., on the north bank of the Umzimkulu River, left his beehive hut and climbed to the top of the hill on whose side it stood for his morning sun-bath. He might have had it, of course, at the gate of his cattle kraal, but he preferred to await his breakfast sitting on an outcrop of granite which commanded a view of the seashore, the river, and the hills above them, for from there he could keep a curious eye on the doings not only of his own people but of his neighbours on the other side of the valley.

Dabulamanzi looked west and saw with satisfaction that his cattle were feeding nicely, head towards the sun as cattle should, and that the herd boys for a wonder were not disturbing them by making the calves run races. He looked south, and it may be, though this is improbable, rejoiced in the wonderful beauty of the view. The hill on which he sat sloped down to a valley densely clothed on its lower levels with lofty dark-green trees. The river, gleaming like silver in the morning sun, raced round a bluff of naked white marble that hung sheer over the water. Beyond the river and above the level of the timber, three or four little circles of huts, each surrounding a cattle kraal, stood amid fields of bright green corn and beyond, cloud shadows, the relics of the storm, chased each other across the faces of treeless hills that rose tier on tier towards what are now known as the Drakensberg Mountains. Suddenly across his subconscious mind, induced perhaps by the need for breakfast, flashed a desire for oysters and mussels, and he remembered that it was the period of the month in which, owing to spring tides, these delicacies could be obtained in the greatest quantities. He resolved to visit the shore at mid-day, if weather conditions permitted, and have a meal of these shell fish, accompanied by a wife or two to gather them for him. A glance seaward, however, showed that this project was impossible. Though the wind had sunk to a calm, a hundred yards and more from the beach the sea was breaking in great green mile-wide waves, and filling the space

between them and the shore with a seething flurry of snow-white surge. The tide had been falling for over an hour and had begun to uncover the black rocks among which the oysters were to be found, but every seventh wave that broke flung a chaos of broken water, a man's height deep, whirling over and past them shoreward till far above high-water mark it wetted the very roots of the grass. Dabulamanzi knew that none of his wives would venture even knee-deep into the sea that day.

The appearance of the shore, however, glutton though he was, drove all thoughts of oysters from his mind, for it was dotted with the figures of strange men, who Dabulamanzi immediately guessed to be the mermen of his mother's folk-tales. That mermen occasionally came out of the sea and had intercourse for awhile with ordinary people was a matter of common knowledge in East Africa before Vasco da Gama dropped anchor at the mouth of the Zambesi, perhaps before the visit of those men, whoever they were, who left Nankin pottery and Chinese coins behind them for twentieth century archæologists to wrangle over, perhaps even before the servants of Hiram, "shipmen that had knowledge of the sea," went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, or Pharaoh-Necho's Phœnician sailors circumnavigated the continent.

Dabulamanzi had never seen any people save those of his own race, but he had often heard about mermen. His knowledge of them was scanty but precise. They concealed their limbs with a peculiar

material that was neither the skin of any known beast nor the bark of any known tree; their hair, no doubt from contact with their natural element, was long and lank instead of short and woolly like that of every man whom Dabulamanzi had ever seen; on approaching the shore they concealed themselves in the hollow trunk of a great tree (a ship is not an easy thing to describe to a man who has never seen one), and during their stay on land, being foolish people, they exchanged valuable knives and beautiful beads for such worthless commodities as gold and ivory.

Dabulamanzi was too far from the beach for his keen eyes to discern whether the hair of the strangers was lank and long, but the limbs of most of them were certainly concealed with a material that was new to him, and the stern of the *Sao Raphael* jutting out of the boiling surge was sufficiently like a tree-trunk to satisfy an uncritical mind. A European might have been alarmed at so unusual a sight, but Dabulamanzi lived in such chronic fear of the Unseen that he had not a tremor to spare for anything that was visible in the light of day. He was, on the contrary, highly delighted. A new experience was always pleasant. Though he had no gold, he knew where to find quantities of ivory, and he badly wanted iron, for owing to wars among the tribes to the north of him his people had not for many months been able to exchange cattle for this most valuable of all commodities. Mermen's iron, moreover, was reputed to be better than that

obtainable from those tribes who smelted it out of rocks.

The headman decided that he would stroll down to the beach and have a closer look at the strangers as soon as he had eaten his morning meal. Meanwhile he endeavoured to find out whether they actually were mermen. After taking a deep breath he shouted a conventional greeting, making momentary pauses between each long-drawn syllable.

“Sa ku bona, 'makos?”

The beach was fully a mile away. Dabulamanzi was accustomed to talk every day of his life with men as keen of hearing and as strong of lung as himself over greater distances than this, but the Portuguese naturally made no reply to a salutation in an unknown tongue that must have seemed, if any one heard it, to have come from the clouds.

“O, strangers, what do you seek?” he called again, and again receiving no reply continued, “Do you wish to barter? What have you brought?”

By this time every Kaffir within a mile or so of Dabulamanzi was taking an interest in the one-sided conversation. Women paused on their way uphill with the day's supply of water to ask the news, and on receiving particulars from Dabulamanzi, passed it on to their sisters hoeing in the cornfields. Men who were digging game-pits among the timber in the valley came out into the open to listen, and passed it on to the boys herding cattle on the hillside. It passed across and across the valley, reached the men who were loafing in the kraals on

the hilltops and raced inland, if not with telegraphic speed, at least as fast as a horse could gallop.

With the exception of the herdboys, who dared not leave the cattle lest they should get among the corn, every member of the community promptly decided to abandon work for the day and visit the strangers, and before Dabulamanzi's chief wife had brought him his porridge, long strings of men and women, laughing, chatting, and singing, were converging towards the headman's kraal.

The survivors of the wreck of the *Sao Raphael* had come ashore on a tongue of sand that lies between the Umzimkulu River and the sea. As soon as the fading light compelled them to abandon hope of rescuing any more swimmers, each man threw himself down where he stood and lay motionless throughout the night, utterly exhausted with the fearful struggles of the last three days. As the rising sun warmed them one by one back to life and consciousness, some limped stiffly into the shade of a palm thicket that clothed the crest of the sandbank. Some sat dejectedly head in hand and elbow on knee, conscious of nothing but pain and misery and utter weariness. Some, stronger and more energetic than the rest, walked listlessly along the shore, examining the faces of the dead that the receding tide had left stranded on the beach. When, some three hours after sunrise, for Africans seldom do anything hurriedly, Dabulamanzi and his people reached the beach, they found ninety-six listless men sitting and lying in little groups under the palms,

too apathetic to resent their intrusion or even to make any attempt to return the boisterous salutations of their visitors.

Natives of Africa, unfortunately, long ago lost the reputation for blamelessness which Homer attributed to them, a reputation which perhaps they never deserved, and it is to be supposed that they have degenerated since the days when the divine Zeus abandoned interest in the Trojan war in order to banquet with them, but Dabulamanzi's people had retained at least the virtue of kindly hospitality. Each visitor to the beach singled out one of the shipwrecked men, and clapping his hands in salutation, offered with courteous gestures a small present of food that he or she had brought. The viands offered — calabashes of sour milk, dishes of millet cakes, pots full of roasted locusts, lumps of all-too-savoury vension, and skewers on which field-mice roasted whole had been neatly spitted — if somewhat less dainty than might be expected of the descendants of men who once entertained the greater gods, were, with the possible exception of the last item, eagerly accepted by the famished Portuguese. Though they had eaten nothing but dry biscuit and but little of that during the past three days, the shipwrecked men, until the coming of the Kaffirs, had been too miserable to realize that they were hungry, but the smell of food revived them. Strength and animation came back to them gradually as they ate, and with returning strength came increased appetite, until men who twenty minutes before had scarcely been able

to lift their heads, devoured the food set before them to the last locust, washed down this somewhat dry and prickly food with great gulps of sour milk, and then rose to their feet to find out who else was alive.

It was a depressing task. Those who had obtained places in the boats, twenty in number, had all safely landed. Of those who had been on board when the ship broke up, out of one hundred and fifty convicts thirty had reached the shore alive; of forty cavalleiros, eighteen had been saved; of the master-gunner and his crew only one, a Portuguese mulatto known as Black Jorge, had survived. Six sailors had reached the land besides the eight who had manned the boats, and of the slaves, with the exception of nine Hindoo lascars and one Arab, the man who had hauled Temple ashore, every one had been drowned. The lieutenant, the Dominican Friar, and the pilot, having found wreckage to cling to, had been washed ashore alive, the former much hampered by his sword, to which, as the only property he had in the world, he had obstinately clung. Of the rest of the crew, the Dutch skipper, the boatswain, the quartermaster, cooper, carpenters, steward, surgeon, and purser, not one was saved.

The first corporate action of the survivors was initiated by Father Sebastian. Calling them together, he spoke of the duty of thanking God for their deliverance, and then, after bidding them take off their shoes, led them barefoot in procession along the beach chanting the Litany and the *Te Deum*. The impromptu penitential service aroused little

devotional enthusiasm. Most of the men were too heartsick to feel for the time being much gratitude for their escape or cheerfully to undergo the additional pain involved by walking barefoot over hot sand and sharp rocks. When the last Amen had been said and the men had donned their shoes again, Ramires counted them and set them to different tasks.

The seamen made a shelter for the women out of broken spars and fragments of sails that had been washed ashore. The pilot adjusted his cumbrous instruments and found the altitude of the sun. The convicts and slaves scraped shallow trenches in the sand and laid the corpses of the drowned therein, while Father Sebastian read the last offices for the dead over the rude graves. The cavalleiros spread the gunpowder to dry in the sun and counted the scanty store of biscuits, and the women, sacrificing portions of their own clothes for the purpose, dressed the wounds of those who had been injured in the last fearful struggle for life.

When there was nothing further that could be done at the moment Ramires called the survivors together (Dom Balthazar, the captain, had appropriated the first shelter the seamen had made, and promptly gone to sleep again).

"Attend to me, men," he said. "It has pleased God to visit our sins with a heavy punishment, and each one of us must play the man if we hope to see our fellow-countrymen once more. If the pilot be right in his reckoning, we are in the Land of Natal."

"The Land of Natal!" gasped one of the cavalleiros who had more knowledge of African geography than was common in those days. "How far from Mozambique?"

"Sofala is the nearest of our settlements, and that is more than two hundred leagues away," replied the lieutenant.

A groan of horror rose from all around. Some ejaculated prayers to the saints, some cursed them with equal fluency. Some stared at each other in silent despair.

"Therefore, we must remember the great deeds of our fathers," continued the lieutenant steadily, "who always were bravest when danger was greatest. Whether we shall ever reach Sofala is known to God alone, but I, who am a man, and a man well stricken in years, say this—that we will try, God helping us. We have enough food to give each man one biscuit daily for eight days. After that the saints must provide, or we die. To-morrow, each man who is not needed to guard the camp must go into the forest and search for fruits that may be eaten. Whatever any man finds he must bring to me to add to the common stock. The man that keeps anything back dies that same hour, be he convict, slave, or cavalleiro. One word more. These Kaffirs," he pointed to Dabulamanzi and his people who had taken a keen and hilarious interest in the penitential procession, but now, becoming bored with the proceedings of the mermen, were beginning to disperse, "have proved our friends.

See to it that we do nothing to make them our enemies, for I believe our lives are in their hands. Now let us rest again for we know not what toil is before us."

Temple's experience of travel in the Syrian deserts had taught him how to make himself comfortable under adverse circumstances. He made himself a soft bed with fronds fallen from the palm trees, laid himself down and slept throughout the rest of that day and the greater part of the night. He might have slept till morning but that an hour or so before dawn he was awakened by the touch of a hand on his shoulder. Rousing himself, he inquired angrily who had disturbed him.

"It is I, Sadak, the Arab, who saved you from the sea. Speak softly lest they hear us," the Arab replied. He used the bastard Arabic spoken by those who travelled in the Levant, a language which Temple could speak with a fluency that was unfettered by regard for grammatical niceties. "If you wish it, I can enable you to reach your own country again. Come with me out of earshot of the others, and I will tell you."

"I know not where we are," the Arab continued, when Temple had followed him a bowshot out of camp, "except that we are far from any settlement of these accursed Portuguese, but I know these people and can speak their tongue, for I made many voyages to this coast in the service of merchants of my own race before I fell into the hands of the foreigners. Some distance to the north, I know not

how far, my countrymen have markets where they trade with the infidels. Let us escape and go north, therefore, and in time we shall fall in with Arab traders. They will give us passage back to the Sea of Edom,* or perhaps to Bassorah, from where we may go, you to your country and I to mine. You and I travelling together may go swiftly and find food on the journey, but if we stay with our masters we shall perish miserably, for how can a large body of men, hampered by women and that fat captain, hope to travel through this country?"

"If you know the tongue of these heathen, why did you not speak with them when they brought us food?"

"Lest the Senhor Lieutenant, knowing my value, should bind me ere I escaped," replied the Arab.

"How shall we find food among them?"

"We shall take copper and iron from the wreckage that has been washed ashore, and buy food as we need it. These people have no metal of their own, and I have seen an ox sold among them for a piece of copper the size of my hand."

"Why do you give me the chance of coming with you?" inquired Temple, a sudden suspicion flashing across his mind.

"Because I love you. Did I not save you from the sea?"

"And by so doing earned the hate of the water spirits. Now give me a true answer."

"It is a long way to where my countrymen trade,

* *I.e.* the Red Sea.

and a man should have a companion on the road," replied Sadak. "Whom should I choose but the only man who can speak my language, now that all the slaves of my own race are drowned?"

"That is more reasonable. Wait one day more till we have rested and know what the others will do. Then I will talk with you again. Now let me sleep again."

Temple did not go to sleep, however. He lay down and considered the Arab's suggestion in all its bearings. The treatment which he had received from the Portuguese had not tended to make him feel in any way inclined to sacrifice anything for their sakes. He saw, quite clearly, that circumstances had made himself and the Arab the two most valuable members of the party, for they afforded a channel by which the Portuguese could communicate with the natives, but this fact did not in the least affect his consideration of the Arab's proposals. If he reached Sofala with the Portuguese he would be still a convict, whereas if he reached the Levant in the Arab's company he would stand a fair chance of winning his way back to England. There was, however, another side to the matter. Why did the Arab want to be hampered on a long and difficult journey with a companion? Why, since all his countrymen consider it exceedingly unlucky to help a drowning man, had he saved his life? Had his person any particular value in the Arab's eyes? Temple remembered that once or twice during the voyage he had been awakened at night by feeling stealthy hands fumbling

in his clothes, and that Sadak had contrived to be near him from the moment the ship struck until she went to pieces.

As soon as it was light Temple roused the lieutenant, and told him all that had passed between himself and the Arab.

"Why did you not accept the man's offer?" inquired Ramires, suspiciously. "Many of the cavalleiros would be glad of the chance. You have no love for us."

"None whatever," agreed Temple frankly, "but I have for my life, and I thought that perhaps we should not go far before Sadak took me unawares and slit my throat."

"Why should he? Has he a grudge against you?"

"Swear that you will reveal what I say to no one."

"On my honour, senhor."

"Perhaps he thinks that I have got the famous jewel, the Nour Jehan. It was on account of a bazaar rumour to that effect that I was arrested at Ormuz."

"And have you got it?"

Temple laughed. "If I have, it is of little use to me here."

"Or to us either," rejoined Ramires. "Senhor Englishman, I promised to intercede for your life. If what you say be true, I shall have good reason to do so, for an interpreter is worth his weight in gold to us. Serve us faithfully, and I swear that I will intercede for your freedom when we join Francisco

Barreto. Should we bind the Arab, do you think, or can we trust him not to escape?"

"He will not leave me, if what I believe is correct."

"Good. Now we will see if he is really able to traffic with the natives. Take iron, as he suggested, go with him to one of the Kaffir villages—the nearest you can find—and try to buy food for us. I will send two cavalleiros with you, lest the Arab should try to kill you and rob you of your jewel."

Sadak was then called and told of the errand on which he was to go. He was promised that if he did his duty as an interpreter, he should receive his freedom and a hundred cruzados as soon as Sofala was reached, but that if he attempted treachery he should die by torture. Ramires even gave details, which cannot be mentioned here, of the particular means that would be used to kill him.

The experiment was a complete success. Temple, accompanied by the Arab and two cavalleiros, took half a dozen nails and a square foot of copper, and returned within two hours carrying two or three cooking-pots and driving two sheep and a fat and docile ox, on whose back—for it had been trained to carry a load—they had laid a heavy goat-skin bag of millet-meal cakes.

When they returned to the beach, they found the captain, the lieutenant, and the other cavalleiros gathered in council. To this council Temple, by reason of his obvious use to the party, was invited. They had been discussing the possibility of making

a boat out of the wreckage, but this project was abandoned when it was realized that the carpenters had both been drowned. A suggestion that a dozen of the most active men should leave the rest in a standing camp till a ship could be sent for them, after being discussed for awhile fell to the ground because both those who were ready to go and those who were prepared to stay insisted that Temple and the Arab should be of their party. Eventually it was decided that they had no choice but to march all together overland, carrying iron and copper with which to buy food on the way, in the hope of eventually reaching the Portuguese settlements.

During the discussion the captain had sat silent, his head in his hands, staring stupidly from one speaker to another. Vice and laziness, added to his natural stupidity, had long since robbed him of any power to command save that which he derived from his influence in high places. Now hardship and terror had combined to bring him to the verge of imbecility. His one contribution to the council's deliberations was an insane command that the pilot, on whom almost as much as on Temple and the Arab the safety of the party now depended, should be hanged forthwith for failing to bring the ship to Mozambique — a command that was tacitly ignored by all his subordinates. When the council broke up, he took the lieutenant aside and made an attempt to regain the authority which he felt was fast slipping from his hands.

“Senhor Ramires,” he said in a trembling voice,

“you must not forget, in making your plans, that my safety is of the greatest importance. You are older than I, more experienced; you are — That is why I left the command in your hands when the mutiny — and the storm ——— You are so capable. Besides, I was not at all well, not at all well.”

He paused, staring vacantly at the lieutenant and clutching at his sleeve.

“We must push on. Push on fast. I must have men to carry me. I cannot walk, and I never was strong. You are so strong ———. We had better leave the women, they could not keep up on the march ———. I do not speak for myself, but the king, my cousin, needs my advice. He could not afford to lose me. I will ask him to promote you. You deserve it — I will make you rich. See, I have jewels, all my savings ———.” He thrust a trembling hand into his doublet and pulled out a handful of the precious stones which represented the result of three years’ extortion and fraud. “See; I can reward you ———”

The lieutenant cut him short abruptly.

“I will have as much care for you as the others, Dom Balthazar,” he replied curtly, and turning on his heel went to superintend the issue of rations to the men.

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH THE OVERLAND MARCH IS BEGUN

REST and returning strength and the glimmer of hope, feeble though it was, that they might yet win their way to a Portuguese settlement, gave heart to the shipwrecked men, and they went to work with a will. Careful examination was made of every piece of wreckage that had been cast ashore, and if any copper sheeting adhered to it this was stripped off and rolled into bundles of a shape convenient for those who were to carry it. The timber was then stacked in heaps and burned as the quickest means of getting at the nails embedded in it. By nightfall of the third day as much metal had been gathered as the party could carry, enough at the price then current to keep them all in provisions for several months. When this was done, the more energetic of the cavalleiros were anxious to begin immediately the overland journey; but Ramires, pointing out that Kaffirs would not exchange good food for metal which they could get for nothing, ordered that such metal as still clung to the wreckage should be destroyed. For two days more, therefore, the men, grumbling heartily, laboured to collect the precious stuff.

At this point of the Natal coast a lofty promontory of rock is split into a deep and narrow chasm, in which the great waves that roll in from the southern ocean surge so fiercely that even on the calmest day no swimmer could keep himself afloat therein for more than a few agonizing seconds. Two centuries later Chaka, the bloody Zulu despot, used to hurl men into this same chasm and amuse himself with the sight of their desperate, fruitless efforts to reach the stiller water of the open sea. Into this natural cauldron the surplus metal from the *Sao Raphael's* timbers was thrown, lest any astute financier among Dabulamanzi's people, by obtaining possession of it, should send down the price of what to the shipwrecked men was infinitely more valuable than coined gold.

Temple, meanwhile, accompanied by the Arab and protected by a guard of men under a cavalleiro, had made several journeys into the neighbouring country, and with a few pounds of nails had purchased not only provision enough for several days, but also five fat and docile oxen, each one trained to carry a load. More oxen he would have bought if he could, but though he bought the five with very little trouble, when he tried to buy a sixth the market rate suddenly doubled. A dozen nails and three pounds of copper was little enough to pay for one ox, but Temple and the officer who accompanied him agreed that to yield to the increased demand would be foolish, since it might encourage those who had provisions to sell to make their prices ruinous.

On the morning of the sixth day a start was made. At the head of the column marched the pilot, compass in hand, Father Sebastian, holding his crucifix aloft, Black Jorge the gunner, and a seaman, the two latter carrying the arquebuses which had been sent ashore. These were followed by the captain, Dom Balthazar d'Elvas, and the women and the boy, on either side of whom, as a guard, marched the twenty-six cavalleiros, eight of whom, the eight who had come ashore in the boats, had their swords. At a short distance behind came the cattle, each carrying a load of copper, in charge of the seamen and slaves, and the rear was brought up by the rest of the convicts, armed with sticks, under the command of the lieutenant, Henrique Ramires. Temple and the Arab the lieutenant kept by his side, not only to interpret in case of need, but in order that as he marched he might learn as much as the Arab could teach of the country that lay ahead. In preparation for the march Dona Beatriz and Senhora Ribeiro had with some difficulty been persuaded to abandon their own clothes and don garments, more suitable for rough work, that had been stripped from the dead bodies of two cavalleiros, and Temple had taken the opportunity to exchange his Arab robe for the leather jacket and breeches of a drowned seaman. With the exception of the women, the captain, and the priest (who had enough to do to carry his heavy crucifix), each person carried a load of metal and provisions.

Soon after sunrise the column began to move

forward, but not until Father Sebastian had called the men together, and in a few eloquent words bade them put their trust in Him who alone had power to carry them through their desperate enterprise. All kneeled while he uttered a prayer, after which, as the march began, those who had sufficient religious training joined with the friar in singing the *Te Deum*. A seven-hundred-mile march overland was a perilous undertaking enough, but few such hazardous enterprises could have been begun under more favourable circumstances. Every omen was favourable. The sun was bright. The air was fresh and cool. The line of the shore wended almost due north-east, the direction in which Sofala lay, so that it was possible to keep a course by marching on firm ground parallel with the beach. The party had as much good food as it needed at the moment, and Dabulamanzi's people, who could have annihilated them with very little trouble, so far from molesting them, had assembled in scores to set them on their way. The first of a series of disasters, however, was soon to fall, and for this the shipwrecked men had to blame, not unkind Fate, but their own selfishness and lack of public spirit.

It was the captain who set the bad example that demoralized the company. This great lump of pampered flesh and evil passions found the task of marching on foot under an African sun more arduous work than he had ever undertaken in his whole indolent life. Three times before the sun

had reached its zenith he called a halt and kept the whole company loitering in idleness while he regained his breath and his energies. When the company halted for the midday meal he selected ten of the sturdiest convicts and told them to make a litter in which to carry him. To his intense indignation, his order was met with a sullenly muttered refusal. Common hardship and common danger had already so weakened artificial grades of rank and authority among the shipwrecked men that respect and obedience could hardly be obtained by any one unable to enforce it by the strength of his own unaided personality. The Dom stared, gaped, became bloated with rage, and bellowed an order to the cavalleiros to take the rebellious convicts and hang them forthwith. Not a man moved. Then the captain, changing his tone, attempted to plead with them, referring in harrowing tones to his physical weakness and the importance of his rank. Even these considerations failed to move his subordinates. Then he began to bargain, offering a full pardon and first one thousand, then five thousand, and then twenty thousand cruzados to any ten men who should carry him to Sofala. The last offer was accepted by some of the convicts, who only dimly realized the magnitude of the task before them, but after that incident Dom Balthazar lost the last shreds of his waning authority. Henceforth his position in the company was peculiar. He received no service unless he paid for it. He gave no orders and received none. At the council meetings of the

cavalleiros neither his commands nor his advice were invited.

With the example of their captain to excuse them, the cavalleiros were not slow to find a means of lightening their labour. A score of Dabulamanzi's people were still accompanying the column after the midday halt, and these were now invited by signs to help to carry loads. Now, the average unsophisticated African native is a cheery, good-hearted individual when he is in a good temper, glad to do any little kindness that does not involve much personal trouble, and very soon each of the natives was carrying a load as gladly as a boy on Yarmouth sands will lend a hand to beach a smacksman's craft. There were, however, more loads to carry than natives to carry them, and those who had not had the luck to get their loads carried for nothing eagerly hired assistance by offering nails or copper out of the supply of metal which each man carried. Very naturally, Dabulamanzi's men threw down the loads they had been willing to carry for nothing, and shouldered those of men who offered to pay them. Men began to outbid each other in their desire to lighten their burdens, and not a few quarrels arose between men who vied with each other in their efforts to hire assistance. At first it was only the cavalleiros who thus rid themselves of their loads, but before long the seamen and the convicts began to follow the example of their officers. Each man who carried a load had his share of the common stock of metal, and each man, therefore, was as

wealthy as his neighbour. Barriers of rank were broken down. The convicts and the seamen bid against the cavalleiros, and those most successful in hiring assistance were those who were most reckless with the metal that had been entrusted to them. When the column halted for the night and the natives were preparing to return to their villages, some men were even so mad as to press nails and pieces of copper sheeting upon them in the hope that they would regard it as payment in advance, and consider themselves engaged to the giver for the next day's march.

The immediate result of this mad competition for their services was that Dabulamanzi's people very justly began to regard the strange white men as fools. Next morning few of those who had been paid in advance returned to the Portuguese camp, but over a hundred others came in the hopes of getting a share of the wealth that had been distributed so lavishly on the previous day. These had now an exaggerated idea of their own value, and the price of labour had consequently risen enormously. Men who had begun by carrying loads out of sheer good nature now refused their help until they had been given an amount of metal that in the first instance had sufficed to purchase an ox.

Even the most reckless of the convicts realized what folly it would be to yield to the increased demand. Reasonable offers being refused, the Portuguese began to threaten, and very soon black men and white were engaged in heated arguments that

were complicated by the fact that no man of either party understood a word of what was said to him. In the middle of the turmoil, a cry arose that the compass had been stolen. Some savage, with the instincts of a jackdaw, seeing what looked like an amusing toy lying unguarded on the ground had abstracted it. The sense of this appalling loss sobered the Portuguese. Gradually the noise subsided, and at length Ramires, speaking through Temple and the Arab, was able to formulate a demand that the compass should be restored.

A scene ensued that would have been highly humorous on a comic-opera stage, but which failed to amuse those whose lives depended on the recovery of the instrument. When the natives had been made to understand what the Portuguese had lost — the compass had to be minutely described several times over — each man loudly expressed abhorrence of the theft, and indignation at the thought that one of their number should be guilty of it. Had it occurred among their neighbours the Abazimu, they declared, they could have understood it, but crime amongst Dabulamanzi's people was unknown. Surely the mermen must be mistaken, they insisted, and would find the glittering box with the moving needle if they searched amongst their loads.

Seeing that these protests seemed likely to be prolonged indefinitely, the lieutenant issued an order that at first excited hilarious wonder among the natives. At his command the Portuguese formed themselves into a military square, with the baggage,

the women, the cattle, the Hindoos, and the captain, who took up this strategic position on his own initiative, inside. Six of the most active cavalleiros then darted forward, seized three of the natives and dragged them inside the square. The manœuvre was a daring one, for the natives could easily have raised a force that would have annihilated the almost unarmed Portuguese by sheer force of numbers, but its suddenness commanded success. The other natives, taken unawares, first bolted to a distance, and then gathered together into a group to discuss the unexpected situation. Had they not all talked at once they might have been able to agree on united aggressive action, but, fortunately for the Portuguese, they were unaccustomed to assume hostilities without first having their spirits heated to fighting pitch by war songs and the incantations of their chief. Some declared for an immediate rescue of their comrades. Others were timid or more wary, not knowing what strange magical powers the strangers might have. At length, after a prolonged talk, throughout which the Portuguese waited in grim and patient silence, the elders decided that the safest course would be to yield to Ramires' demand, and restore the toy which the incomprehensible mermen seemed to value so much more than they valued really valuable metal.

The compass was handed back, and the natives, seeing that the Portuguese were not such fools as they had thought, cheerfully shouldered the loads without further haggling, for the African is in some

respects a very reasonable being, and seldom harbours resentment for punishment that he has deserved. The Portuguese, however, were not prepared so easily to forget what had occurred, and now regarded their allies with distrust. Hitherto in their progress along the shore their route had lain over level sand, packed firm above high-water mark with short, closely matted grass, to march over which was no more difficult than to march over a parade-ground. Presently, however, they came to a part of the shore where tangled jungle ran down to a beach that was encumbered with heavy sand, broken at frequent intervals by piers of jagged rock. At this point a well-worn path left the shore and wound inland over gently undulating country that offered little obstacle to the onward march. The natives who were marching ahead struck inland at this point, as a matter of course, but the Portuguese, fearing a trick and wishing to have the sea at their backs in case of attack, called them back and forced them to march laboriously along the uneven beach.

Now Dabulamanzi's people, like most of their race, were not over fond of work, and had the strongest possible objection to work that was more arduous than it need have been. Very soon they became sullen and ill-humoured. By way of improving matters the Portuguese began to drive them forward with blows. From the scene of the shipwreck to the place from which the path left the shore and wound inland the column had averaged a pace of nearly a league an hour. From that point onward,

though they toiled incessantly, they advanced scarcely half a league between noon and sunset. When camp was formed for the night every one was worn out and ill-tempered. Friction arose between the cavalleiros and the convicts, the former wishing to take their ease and the latter protesting that each man should do his share of the work in the labour of fetching water and fuel. Next morning no natives came back to the camp, so the Portuguese had to shoulder their loads themselves, and struggle along as best they could. When they tried marching through the jungle, tangled roots tripped them up and thorny vines tore skin and clothing. On the shore they sank over their ankles, and the sand, driven before a fierce, scorching north wind, filled their eyes and inflamed their skin.

At the noon-day halt it was discovered that provisions were running short. Temple and the Arab, therefore, accompanied by a guard of twelve men under Senhor de Brito, the cavalleiro who had accompanied him on his previous foraging expeditions, struck inland in search of a village. They discovered that the jungle through which they had toiled so painfully, although it fringed the beach for mile upon mile, was a narrow belt scarcely more than half a mile wide, and that beyond it lay grassy open plains between low hills, the summits of many of which were crowned with a cluster of huts. To the nearest group of huts they made their way, and with easy confidence born of previous experience demanded provisions.

The village consisted of a dozen huts and two or three beehive-shaped granaries built around a cattle kraal. At the entrance to the kraal were squatting some men who on the previous day had carried loads for the Portuguese; while two smiths, working with a primitive goatskin-bellows and a heavy stone hammer, were busily converting the iron nails they had earned into knives and spear-heads.

Temple, who had already learned a few essential words, gave the customary greeting.

"We see you," he began. "We have come to barter."

His salutation was received in sullen silence. After an awkward pause, he said again —

"We have come to buy food."

"There is no food here," answered one of the smiths at last. "We are hungry in this village."

"Is there food at that village?" asked Temple, through Sadak the Arab interpreter, pointing to a group of huts on the next hill-top.

The question was discussed with every appearance of earnestness by the knot of idlers, but at length the elder of the two smiths, holding a red-hot nail on the flat rock while his assistant hammered it, replied —

"They are hungry there also. They have no food."

"Show them the metal," said Senhor de Brito.

"Say we will give either iron or copper."

The men looked with careless indifference at the metal which the Arab offered. Each of them had got more than he wanted at the moment and desired

no more. Metal had in fact become a drug in the market. They tossed it back indifferently, saying, "We have no food."

"What will they take? In God's name!" exclaimed Senhor de Brito. "Here, men, empty your wallets. Perhaps some one of us has something that will take their fancy."

The value of the articles thus offered was not great. A thimble, a rosary, one or two amulets such as were worn by some Europeans in the sixteenth century, as they are worn to-day, to avert the evil eye, and a crude, badly-soiled picture of the owner's patron saint, were all the vendible trinkets that could be found amongst the whole company. These failed even to arouse the curiosity of the natives. At last a basket containing enough grain to give a meal to a dozen men was offered in exchange for the Arab's cotton robe, which, by the way, Senhor de Brito had offered for sale without consulting its owner.

"That is not enough. Tell them, if they won't sell, we will take what we want for nothing," exclaimed the cavalleiro. "Draw your knives, men."

The threat was either misunderstood or regarded as vain, but was carried into effect with a suddenness that completely surprised the natives. Scarcely a blow was struck before they bolted helter-skelter down the hill, leaving the Portuguese to ransack the granaries at their leisure.

That night, every member of the shipwrecked company had enough and to spare. It was the last

full meal they were to eat for a long time. Next day, after a consultation among the officers, it was decided to leave the beach and to march further inland along the path that Senhor de Brito's party had discovered. It was intended to repeat the tactics that had proved so successful and to take by force food which the natives would not sell, but though they saw signs of human habitation all around them, not a single man nor an ounce of food was to be found. Village after village was entered. In each the huts were deserted, the granaries stood empty. Fresh hoof-prints were found in the mud of the cattle kraals, but not an ox was to be seen. Yet, though not a single native showed himself, the Portuguese knew that their every movement was watched. From each hill-top they heard the voices of unseen men calling to each other, and Sadak reported that the men they passed were signalling their progress to the watchers who waited beyond.

Throughout the day they marched, zigzagging from one empty village to another. At midday they halted to eat the last of the stolen food, and the voices on the hill-tops became silent, but a cry rang out and passed from mouth to mouth as soon as the march was resumed. Soon it seemed that the unseen watchers were nearer, and that there were more of them. Some of those who shouted were far ahead, others seemed to be scarcely a bowshot behind. Presently they came to a river, that which is now known as the Umkomanzi, and at once the surrounding country seemed alive with men. The

river was broad and deep, and it became necessary to halt until a ford could be found. A square was formed around the women and the captain, while volunteers floundered about neck-deep in the water seeking for shallows. All the while the voices came nearer and nearer. At last a spear flung by an unseen hand whirled through the thicket, and wounded a slave in the thigh.

"Let us advance to meet them, Senhor Ramires," said one of the cavalleiros at last. "Teach these curs that it is dangerous to yap at the heels of Portuguese conquistadores!"

"And break up our formation! No, senhor," replied the lieutenant. "We are all too few. We will frighten them, though. Are your matches alight, gunners?"

"Ready, senhor," replied Black Jorge the gunner and the seamen who had been entrusted with the second arquebus.

"Then fire a shot."

The sixteenth-century arquebus was a cumbrous affair. For fighting anywhere except in open country it was as useless as an old-type elephant gun would be for snipe-shooting. It took several minutes to load and some time to fire even when loaded. The smouldering match of twisted rag that was carried, when not in actual use, between the fingers of the arquebusier's left hand had to be puffed into a glow, then fitted into the groove of the hammer and blown again. The lock of the arquebus was then opened, a final puff given to

the match, the trigger pulled, and, if nothing went wrong, the charge exploded carrying death and destruction to any living thing in a direct line with, and within twenty yards of, the muzzle. It was so heavy as to require balancing on a fork, and could be used with little effect at any object that was not absolutely stationary. Black Jorge and his colleague therefore fired at random, but the shot had the desired effect of terrifying savages who had never heard of gunpowder. After one shrill yell of terror, the shouting in the thicket ceased. No more spears were thrown, and the Portuguese took comfort in the belief that their assailants had fled. Five times those who were seeking a ford staggered panting to the shore, and each time the whole column moved in a compact body further up the river. At last a path was found leading straight down into the water, and those who advanced into it at this point reported that though the current was strong and the passage obstructed with boulders it was possible to cross.

A party of twenty men crossed to hold the further side of the ford. Then the women, the child, and the captain were carried painfully across. Next the slaves were ordered to drive the cattle through the river, but now an unexpected difficulty arose. The oxen were docile and exceedingly well-trained. On the first day's march, when the natives were still friendly, those who had sold them had shown that they would lie down, get up, go forward and turn to the right or to the left at the word of command

without any one at their heads. The Portuguese and the Hindoo slaves, however, had not the knack of handling cattle after the African fashion, and now they discovered that a tremendous lot of beating is required to make an ox go where he does not wish. The oxen would advance knee-deep into the river, snort, bellow, and then turn and plunge up the bank again, knocking down any one that happened to stand in their way. The Hindoos, helped by a dozen Portuguese, tried to drag them by the horns one by one through the water, but when they got into the strongest part of the current were obliged to let go, in order to keep their own footing. They tried to push them through the water and only got knocked down for their pains. At last, after half an hour's hard work, punctuated by much blasphemy, a shrill whistle was heard from the depths of the thicket. The oxen, hearing at last a command they understood, flung up their heads and listened. The whistle was repeated. With loud bellows they charged with lowered horns headlong up the bank, scattering seaman and slave, convict and cavalleiro to right and left, and before any one realized what had happened they were out of sight in the thicket, the sound they made as they crashed through the undergrowth becoming fainter and fainter till it died away altogether.

The Portuguese language is rich in phrases that express rage and disgust, but it was all too poor for the needs of the moment. Not a man spoke. The calamity that had befallen them was too great for

words. In a moment they had lost beasts that alive could carry as much as could twenty men, or dead would have fed the whole company for three weeks. The metal packed on their backs would have sufficed, properly used, to have purchased food enough for a month. Worst of all, this metal, distributed as it soon would be far over the country-side, would make that commodity, hitherto priceless in the natives' eyes, so cheap that it would be practically impossible for the Portuguese to buy provisions until they reached a district far from Dabulamanzi's clan.

"Senhor de Brito, we must get those oxen and their loads back at all costs," said the lieutenant, as these thoughts flashed through his mind. "Take twenty men and don't come back till you have recovered them. We will camp on the far side of the river till you return."

The cavalleiro saluted, selected twenty of the most active of the convicts and marched, while the rest of the Portuguese hurriedly crossed the river. A camp was formed. A guard was set. What little food remained was divided and eaten, and the weary company, worn out with marching and hunger, waited with ever-growing anxiety for the return of their companions. Night fell and still there was no sign of de Brito and his men. Five times during the night Ramires rose and peered into the gloom, listening intently. At last he fell asleep. At the first gleam of dawn a sentry roused him.

"They have returned, senhor. I can see them on the farther side."

The lieutenant rose and looked. On the opposite bank stood an indistinct group of figures, shouting and waving their arms.

"What are they shouting for? Why don't they cross?" said a cavalleiro who also had risen.

"Perhaps they cannot see the ford. Shout to them to wait till it is lighter," answered Ramires.

"Senhor, there are more than twenty men there," said the sentry.

"But that must be Senhor de Brito. I can see the flash of light on his sword. In Heaven's name, shout and ask what it is they want."

The sentry shouted and was answered with a wild yell. As the light grew stronger they could see that the weapon that had gleamed was indeed De Brito's sword, but it was brandished with a gesture of defiance, and the man who brandished it was a brawny savage.

An expression of pain and misery came over the old lieutenant's face. For a moment it lingered, and then his voice rang out as firm and clear as when many years before he had rallied his men at the siege of Diu.

"Strike camp and march for the beach. We have lost the pick of our men, and we must have the sea at our backs in case of attack."

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH GREED PREYS UPON MISERY

AN hour's march brought the column to the beach, where, being comparatively safe from attack, the men scattered in search of anything that might prove to be eatable, after sentries had been posted to guard against surprise. Some ransacked the thicket that stretched down to high-water mark for wild fruits and roots, and learned far more quickly than any botanist of that day could have taught them which were merely insipid, which were astringent and nasty but eatable, and which were actively poisonous. Others searched the rocks, and, the tide being low, were fortunate enough to find a scanty supply of mussels and oysters. Each man foraged for himself and ate anything he found as soon as he had found it. Senhora Ribeiro joined her husband in the search for food, the two sharing with their little boy anything they found. Dona Beatriz, too, had to forage for herself, a circumstance that aroused a certain amount of comment among the cavalleiros, since all had supposed that Dom Vicente would look after his prospective wife. Some of those who were fortunate in their search for shellfish, either from

natural courtesy or because they thought it well to win the favour of a lady who had been promised a wealth-producing office at Sena, occasionally offered her a handful of mussels or oysters, but most of them found it difficult to find enough for their own needs, and Dona Beatriz would have remained hungry if she had not joined in the general search.

Hitherto Captain Dom Balthazar had received an ample share of food whenever rations had been distributed. For awhile after reaching the shore he waited patiently in the shade of a thicket, expecting that food would be brought to him. Presently he realized that if he were to have any breakfast he must find it for himself. With a heavy groan he rose, made his way to the rocks and began to search, getting little beyond bruises for his pains, for he instinctively chose to hunt amongst the rocks that were most easily climbed and these had been examined before by more active men. At last he came upon a seaman standing shoulder deep in a pool and groping with his fingers in a crevice; as he approached the man jerked a large crayfish from its hiding-place and climbing out of the pool, killed, dismembered, and began to eat his find.

Tortured with hunger the captain attempted to assert the authority that he had lost.

"Give me that fish," he commanded.

"I don't beat a bush for other men to catch birds," the man replied insolently.

"Sell, then," pleaded the captain desperately, fumbling in his wallet and producing the least

valuable of his jewels, a tiny gold cross studded with small rubies.

The exchange was made. Dom Balthazar sat down to enjoy raw crayfish, and the man resumed his search. Presently, having satisfied his own hunger, for he had been an experienced fisherman in Portugal before he had been exiled to India, it occurred to the seaman that others might be willing to buy. Most of the cavalleiros had saved a few jewels and gold coins from the wreck, and soon the convict was driving a trade that, had he been in Portugal, would soon have made him independent for life. Others followed his example and a brisk trade sprang up, those who had not been fortunate in their search for food eagerly buying it at the rate of a gold piece or a jewelled trinket for a scanty meal.

When all had satisfied their hunger in a more or less unsatisfactory manner the order was given to march, but now, instead of marching in solid formation, the company scattered widely over the shore and in the thicket, in order that even while marching the men might lose no opportunity of finding food. Scouts were ordered to keep a look-out on the landward side of the column, but these performed their duty in a perfunctory manner, each one being more concerned about his own appetite than about the safety of the party. Fortunately the natives did not molest them. If any man chanced to emerge on the landward side of the belt of jungle that fringed the shore, his appearance was promptly hailed by a native scout from the nearest hill-top,

but this was the only sign they had that their movements were still being watched.

For the next six days the wretched company moved forward like a swarm of very hungry and very inexperienced locusts. As locusts alight on a blade of corn, eat while their fellows pass them and then fly on, so every man in turn hurried forward till he was well ahead of the main body, then flung down his load and foraged for food while his fellows passed him, until when far in the rear his fear of being cut off from his companions overcoming his appetite, he picked up his load again and hurried forward to repeat the process farther on.

The men told off to march on the west or landward side of the column in case of an attack by the natives, were relieved every two hours in order that they might have time to forage, but so great was the need constantly to search for food that the duty was very carelessly carried out. The safety of the whole was subordinated to the pressing needs of each individual. Discipline became slacker and slacker till Henrique Ramires, by an act of grim justice, restored it again. On the second evening after the loss of de Brito and his company, when it became too dark to hunt for food, the order was given to form camp for the night. As the men assembled, it was seen that one man was without the load that had been entrusted to him. When questioned he declared sullenly that, as the metal seemed useless since they could no longer obtain provisions with it, he had abandoned it.

“May God pardon you,” said the lieutenant solemnly. “It is not old iron but men’s lives that you have thrown away. It is true that the metal is useless now, but in a few days we shall have passed out of the country of our enemies and, God willing, be able to use it again. Think you that we can reach Sofala with no better food than we have had this last two days? Go to Father Sebastian and make your peace with God, for you die to-night.”

The man was hanged in the grey dawn, and the wretched company prepared to march. When the others moved forward one man, the Hindoo slave who had been wounded at the crossing of the Umkomanzi River remained seated by his load. When ordered to march he replied that his wound was sore and that death was better than misery. He was jerked roughly to his feet and his load hoisted on to his shoulder, but he flung it down again, and grovelling at Ramires’ feet pleaded to be hanged or to be left alone to die.

“The man speaks the truth. He cannot march,” said the lieutenant compassionately; then calling up four of the seamen he directed them to carry the wounded man through the thicket and set him down somewhere within sight of a native village. “Put a few nails by his side,” he said. “At the worst the natives can but kill him, and that will be better than to die of hunger, and it may be that they will show kindness to one of their own colour.”

During the heat of the next day the lieutenant, who had had the luck to find a large cluster of

mussels, was sitting down to enjoy them when he heard a cry from the rear, and looking back saw Senhor Ribeiro hurrying forward through the heavy sand.

"Help, senhors, help, for the love of the saints," he cried. "My wife is ill."

Henrique Ramires and a few others went back and found Senhora Ribeiro, far behind the rest of the company, lying full length on a rock and breathing hard. Misery and toil and insufficient food had worn her out. Soon after the column had taken to the shore she and her husband had found that their boy could not without help keep up with the column. The mother therefore had carried him for a good part of each march, while the father, having three mouths to provide for, had devoted himself entirely to the desperate search for food. The few valuables that they had saved from the wreck had already been surrendered in exchange for food. Their last trinket had been given the night before for a handful of astringent wild fruit, all of which had been given to the boy, and on this day Senhora Ribeiro had eaten nothing. She made a pitiable picture as she lay there. Her hands were torn and bleeding from clutching at barnacle-encrusted rocks, and an ugly bruise on her pale cheek marked a wound that she had got when, her arms encumbered with the boy's weight, she had fallen face forwards against a boulder.

They cut poles from the thicket and ropes of tough creeping vines, and made a rough litter on

which they carried her forward to the main body. A halt was then called, and after a few men had helped Senhor Ribeiro to find enough food to give his wife a meal, a council meeting was held to discuss what should be done.

"We cannot sacrifice the safety of all for the sake of a woman and a child," declared Captain Dom Balthazar. "If we suit our pace to hers, we shall all perish miserably before we get halfway to Sofala. Give Senhor Ribeiro his share of the metal, and leave them here."

There was a grim silence. Heartless and selfish though the advice was there was dreadful truth in what the captain said, yet the courage and gallantry that had made the small Portuguese nation for a short time one of the great powers of the world was not dead.

"Not while I have strength to lift my hand will I see a lady of Portugal abandoned," cried one cavalleiro, a young adventurer named Furtado, and a dozen others echoed assent. Before many weeks had passed the speaker and those who seconded him, rendered utterly brutish by starvation and ceaseless toil, were to prove false to his gallant words, but the latent nobility of their class was still alive, and there were few at that meeting who at the moment would not light-heartedly have died to save a lady from a miserable end.

"If men can be hired to carry the captain, men can be hired to carry the senhora and her boy," continued the cavalleiro, "and I for one will pay

my share." He placed his cap as he spoke in the centre of the group, and drawing three rings from his fingers and an uncut jewel from his wallet, threw them into it. The jewels had not been reputably acquired. They had in fact been taken at the dagger's point from a trembling Hindoo merchant in Goa, who had foolishly offered to sell them to the cavalleiro, but it is to be hoped that the recording angel now blotted out all record of that transaction. The lieutenant took a gold cross that hung on a slender chain round his neck and placed it in the cap.

"That is all I have, senhors," he said, "and I promised my mother that I would never part with it, but if she is looking at me now from heaven she will absolve me from my vow."

Some contributed all they had. Some put a few jewels and coins into the cap and swore it was all they possessed. The captain was the last man to contribute. He did not offer to pay his share until the cap was thrust very pointedly under his nose. Then after much anxious fumbling amongst his clothes he produced and added to the rest a trinket of which the value was scarcely more than Henrique Ramires' contribution. Jewels worth about three thousand cruzados were thus collected, and for this five convicts were found willing to carry Senhora Ribeiro and her child for one-half of each day's march, if they would walk for the rest of the time, and if the cavalleiros would take it in turns to find three of their number to help in the work.

On the next day they came to a part of the shore where for mile after mile the sandy beach was unbroken by rocks. It became possible to march faster, but very much more difficult to find food, for where there were no rocks there were no shellfish. All along the beach a line of stranded seaweed marked the point to which the previous tide had risen, and amongst this only was food to be found. Very poor food it was — starfishes and jellyfishes for the most part, but here and there a lucky hunter found a dead bream or a tiny crab — yet it was pounced upon and devoured more eagerly than any savoury dish that graces a king's table.

The next member of the company to show signs of failing was the grey-bearded lieutenant. John Temple, who had lagged behind the rest to cook a collection of marine garbage in hopes of making it more palatable, came up with him ploughing through the heavy sand, and noticed how painfully he laboured, how gaspingly he caught his breath, how the great drops of sweat rolled down his pallid face.

"Let me carry your load awhile, senhor," said the Englishman, "lest you get left behind."

"Many thanks for your kindness, senhor," replied the lieutenant, "but I must set an example to the men by bearing my share of the common burden."

"Zounds! Have you not work enough to do in keeping this mongrel crew together? Come. My back is broad enough for two."

With gentle force Temple took the lieutenant's load and hoisted it on to his own shoulders, and the two went on together.

"Have you eaten to-day?" asked Temple presently.

"Not yet," answered the lieutenant. "I have had no luck in my search."

"Why then, you must not be too proud to dine with me. Forget for one moment that I am a convict, and remember that I am an English gentleman, and am here through no fault of my own."

"Have you food, then?" inquired the lieutenant eagerly, for his pride was rapidly melting under the influence of Temple's tactful kindness.

"No food, but the means of buying it," answered Temple, displaying a handful of gold coins and trinkets. "I am making my fortune faster at this fishmongery trade than ever I did as a jewel merchant in London. Rest here for a while, and I will go and bargain."

Fortune favoured him. The main body of the company had halted and was grouped around a convict who, being in the lead, had had the luck to come upon the stranded body of a dead shark. The lucky finder was retailing this carrion at from fifteen to twenty cruzados for a slice two inches thick.* Temple bought the head in exchange for a jewel

* This incident is taken from an historical account of the march undertaken by the survivors of the wreck of the *San Bento*, which went ashore near Umtata. The historian remarks that "the price of that fish would have bought a large farm in Portugal."

worth about 30 cruzados (about £ 15), and carried it back to the lieutenant.

"May God reward you, senhor," cried Ramires, gratefully, as he filled his mouth with the malodorous food, "and may God forget me if I do not stand your friend if ever we reach Sofala."

The ease with which lucky finders of food rapidly acquired what passes for wealth in highly organized communities, and the recklessness with which men bid against each other had curious results. Men who six months before had begged for food in Goa, having had their heads turned by the possession of far greater wealth than they had ever hoped to obtain, might be seen gratifying their vanity by hiring cavalleiros to carry their loads, fetch them water and even to perform more menial offices. Gold and jewels changed hands rapidly. A man who in the morning was carrying another's load might in the afternoon, by having the luck to find more garbage than he needed for his own appetite, be the possessor of sufficient wealth to enable him to hire a man to carry his own load. One result of the rapid interchange of valuables was that the men who were carrying Dom Balthazar, and who consequently had little leisure in which to search for food, said that they would carry him no further, for they could earn more than he had promised them by engaging in what Temple had called "the fishmongery trade." The unhappy captain expostulated, pleaded, and finally doubled his offer, distributing among them meanwhile as an additional gratuity a number of

jewels whose value could scarcely have been less than a thousand cruzados.

Those who were helping the cavalleiros to carry Senhora Ribeiro also struck for higher pay, and this not being forthcoming set her down to walk. It was now, however, less difficult for her to keep up with the rest, not because she was stronger, but because the survivors of the shipwreck, even those whose wallets were heavy with gold, were hourly getting weaker. The loose sand through which they floundered filled their worn-out boots and chafed their skins. The sun beat down from a sky that was grey with heat haze. The foul food they ate created disorders that racked them with paroxysms of fearful pain. Few men could march ahead for more than a furlong at a time without resting. Yet they struggled on without any further loss to their number, for those whose hearts were strongest helped the weak. One of the survivors of the *San Bento*, wrecked years before at Umtata, recorded a parallel instance of heroism that may well be quoted.

“The difficulties of the way being so terrible that the strength of many being unable to endure them, they lay down between the rocks along the tracks we were following so weary and hopeless of ever extricating themselves that, calling on our Lord to forgive their sins, they did not cease from bidding farewell to those that passed them by. These seeing their friends lie thus, stayed and sat down beside them, forcibly urging them to continue on their way, saying that they would by no means leave

the spot without them, and adding many other things which clearly showed their excessive grief at seeing them brought to such a pass, by which those who lay upon the ground were encouraged to exert their feeble strength once more and resume their march as well as they could."

So it was with the survivors of the *Sao Raphael's* crew. Cavalleiros helped convicts and convicts helped cavalleiros, not always for money but often from sheer manliness and charity. One gleam of comfort they had. During the last day the scouts had heard no shouts from the hill-tops, and the hope spurred them on that they had passed beyond the territory of those natives whose enmity they had aroused, and might soon reach others who would befriend them.

On the sixth day after the massacre of de Brito's party, they came to rocks again. While they were scattering in search of shellfish a shout was heard from a tree-crowned promontory that jutted out into the sea. All stood still to listen. The Arab, on being questioned, declared that he believed, though he was not sure, that the shout was not a threat but a friendly greeting. Desperate with need, the party left the shore, and keeping well together followed a path that struck inland from the beach. An hour later they crossed the promontory, and saw below them a broad inlet, the very same which Vasco da Gama had entered seventy-four years before, and on the nearer shore, a cluster of huts surrounded by cornfields and cattle pasturing near by.

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH HENRIQUE RAMIRES GIVES AWAY HIS SWORD

SOME three centuries after the wreck of the *Sao Raphael* a missionary named the promontory that juts into the sea to the south of Durban harbour, the *Berea*, because the tribe that inhabited it were "more noble" than the Zulus, among whom he had first endeavoured to settle. The forerunners of those who won the missionary's praise were equally hospitable. Before the sun had set each member of the shipwrecked party had received as much good food as he could eat, a great deal more in fact than in his feeble condition he could eat with safety. One or two died that night.

For three days the company did little else but eat and sleep. On the fourth they marched a mile or two in order to encamp again at the village of Ijolo, the chief. As soon as the new camp was pitched, Father Sebastian reminded them of their spiritual duties and the rest of the day was devoted to pious exercises. First the company, reciting the Litanies of Our Lady, followed the Dominican barefoot in solemn procession through the camp.

Then a cross and a rude altar were erected, and Masses were said for the souls of de Brito and his companions.

Ijolo and his people watched these proceedings from a distance, and discussed with each other their object. Probably they decided that it was some curious kind of game, for when the Portuguese dispersed and began to prepare the evening meal Ijolo conveyed through the Arab an invitation to the whole company to meet him next day on the hill that overlooked the inlet. The Portuguese, glad enough to amuse themselves after the misery they had suffered, accepted the invitation, and on the following day witnessed a form of sport, now obsolete, but once common among the natives of Natal. A score of oxen had been brought to the hill-top. At a signal from Ijolo these were driven headlong down the hillside, their owners following hard after them, shouting and whistling to stimulate and direct their charges. The oxen raced straight ahead for half a mile, and then, with no guidance save the voices of their owners, turned at a right angle and galloped along a course that had been agreed upon. This was an imaginary circle described round the place at which Ijolo and the Portuguese stood, so that those on the hill-top looking down could see oxen racing in a wide circle round them, guided by the voices of their panting owners, who were able to keep up with them by running round the hill on a smaller circle and at a higher level. It was a game that needed an extraordinarily high degree of training

on the part of the oxen, as well as speed, endurance, skill, and considerable lung power on the part of those who ran parallel with and directed them. Although many of the native spectators on the hill-top complicated matters by yelling encouragement to those oxen which they wished to win, and, for their notions of what is sportsmanlike were primitive, false directions to those which they wished to lose the race, only five of the cattle put themselves out of the running by taking an unauthorized short cut. Twice round the hill they raced and then, foaming at the mouth, turned sharply inwards and together with their perspiring masters breasted the hill with one final headlong spurt to where Ijolo stood.

The sport had the excellent effect of establishing more firmly the friendship between Ijolo's people and the Portuguese. Unfortunately it inspired the latter with a desire — that proved costly — to give an exhibition of their own national sport.

"Come, senhors," cried out one of the cavalheiros, "let us have a bull fight, and show the Kaffirs what we can do."

In spite of prudent objections from Ramires the suggestion was received with enthusiasm.

"It will help us to forget our miseries," urged one.

"Oxen are cheap enough, and we can use the meat afterwards," said another.

"A couple of bulls will be enough to show what we can do," continued a third; "and we ought to make some return for the Kaffirs' hospitality."

The lieutenant continued to protest, but the majority overruled his prudent counsels. A bull was purchased and driven into Ijolo's cattle-kraal, and a young and athletic cavalleiro, having borrowed Ramires' sword, advanced to fight with it. The bull, however, having been accustomed all its life to treatment as considerate as that which is said to be lavished on the horses of Bedouin Arabs, refused to perform its part in the sport. While the cavalleiro waved a rag in its face it chewed the cud with stolid indifference. When the amateur matador pricked its hide it bellowed with terror, and made desperate attempts to escape from the ring. In disgust, the cavalleiro gave it the death stroke, and called for another. A second bull was brought, driven into the kraal, and ignominiously butchered. The tameness of the proceedings made the Portuguese all the more reckless in their desire to make a display. More bulls were bought, and other cavalleiros insisted on attempting to show their skill. Six were killed, and still not one had shown fight. Prudence was forgotten. More bulls, and again more, were recklessly bought, driven into the kraal, bullied for a while, and slaughtered.

At last darkness put an end to the ignoble exhibition, and the Portuguese, having far more fresh meat on their hands than they could possibly eat, invited Ijolo and all his people to a feast. This was an invitation such as the savages thoroughly understood. As the strangers provided meat they, as a matter of course, supplied beer and music.

Messengers were despatched in every direction, and soon from each scattered group of huts there came files of men and women, some of the former carrying drums, all the latter bearing great pots of the kind of beer that is brewed in Africa to-day, and has been brewed perhaps ever since the African first learned to cultivate the millet from which it is made.

Very soon half a hundred fires were alight, and the meat, except such little as the Portuguese reserved for their own use, was apportioned, the heads to the herd boys, the shins to the slaves, the briskets to the elders of the tribe, and the other parts according to the custom which ordained that only men of certain rank should eat certain joints. When the moon rose the drums began to beat and the savages to dance, the men on one side of the village, the women on the other, the children wherever they liked, so long as they did not interfere with the enjoyment of their elders. Now an African dance, as many travellers have discovered to their cost, is easily set going but very difficult to stop. Twice the sun rose, and twice it set, but never for a moment did the dancing or the drumming cease. Worn-out dancers from time to time fell out of the rank, perspiring drummers relinquished their instruments to those waiting to take their places, and sat down for another meal, or snatched a few hours' sleep in an empty hut. At last the meat and beer were finished, the ranks of the dancers thinned, the drummers one by one shouldered their instruments and went off home, and Ijolo's village returned to its normal quiet.

The feast, to use a modern conventional phrase, was a great success, but it was a costly success for the Portuguese. Of the score more or less of oxen that they had wantonly killed not so much meat remained as would have filled a single cooking-pot. Only the bones and hides remained for them to put to what use they could. And when Henrique Ramires attempted to buy more, he found, to his dismay, that none were for sale. The mind of the African property-owner is still almost inexplicable to the European. Sometimes he will give lavishly, sometimes he will haggle shrewdly, sometimes he will absolutely refuse to sell something, though he be offered three times the price he accepted the day before, and when he refuses to sell, nothing short of actual compulsion will make him change his mind. The lieutenant, speaking through Temple and the Arab, offered higher and still higher prices for oxen, but was met with the reply that all the available oxen had already been sold. Milk, grain, and fish were offered in large quantities, but when these were refused and oxen demanded, the savages obstinately replied that they needed all they had left for future occasions.

The bad news imparted by the lieutenant came as a rude shock to the cavalleiros. The natural reaction caused by plenty of good food after misery and semi-starvation had induced a feeling that the back of the journey was broken, and that the greater part of their troubles lay behind them. Now forced once again to face grim realities each

man had to acknowledge that the behaviour of the whole company had been madly reckless. They had parted with more metal than they could afford in exchange for the oxen they had killed, and, worse still, most of them, still untaught by experience, had competed so eagerly to obtain fish and the daintier varieties of food offered by the Kaffirs that they had bid against each other, and thus had so raised the price of provisions that the natives had come to regard them as gullible fools.

At a council meeting held as soon as the lieutenant had made known his inability to buy more cattle, it was decided, in the first place, that preparations should immediately be made to resume the march ; secondly, that for the future no one save the lieutenant himself should have authority to buy provisions. The precaution was a wise one, but it was adopted too late to save the Portuguese from the consequences of their folly. So much metal had passed into the hands of the savages that they had as much as they desired, and would buy no more.

At a cost in precious iron and copper that taught them a bitter lesson, enough food for three days was collected, and the march was resumed. After rounding the inlet on which the port of Durban now stands, the company, no longer fearing attack, steered by compass overland instead of resuming the difficult march along the shore. And now a new hardship met them. Before reaching Durban they had suffered hunger, but had found water at frequent intervals. Now they had food

enough for a while, but they experienced the agonies of thirst. River-beds were few and for the most part dry.

The country, with its endless monotony of bare windswept hill and tree-dotted valley, seemed to present pictures such as one sees in a troubled dream that constantly changes yet is always the same. The wanderers used to quicken their pace each time they reached a hill-top, momentarily spurred by the hope that the next view would reveal a river. Each time their eyes searched just such thirsty dongas as they had seen in the valley they had just left, and the one before it, and the one before that for many a weary mile. At long intervals they found shallow ponds of foul-smelling slimy water, fringed with a margin of heavy knee-deep mud. Sometimes on ground that was marshy in the wet season they discovered the deep footprints of elephants, baked hard by the sun, and if they were lucky these contained a few precious pints of filthy water, the result of local showers. Many wandered miles from the main body in search of water, and if they found it sold it for its weight in gold. It often happened that a cup of water containing three-quarters of a pint was sold for ten cruzados, and for the money thus paid some one was willing on the next day to risk fetching water for gain.

The search was dangerous, for some went so far from the main body that they were unable to find it again, and their companions, knowing that it would

be hopeless to seek for them in that desolate wilderness, could only speculate whether they had fallen down exhausted, or whether, driven mad by agony, they had wandered aimlessly till they died. Each evening large fires were lit to guide those who had strayed away, and each morning Father Sebastian said Masses for the souls of those who had failed to rejoin the main body.

And now the food began to fail once more, for since leaving Ijolo's village they had not seen a single Kaffir hut. At the end of the second day's march the lieutenant put the company on half-rations. At the end of the fifth day's march rations were reduced again. If one of the company threw down his load to chase a lizard or an iguana, all those nearest him joined in the hunt and fought over the morsel of food when it was caught. If the body of a dead beast was discovered, the whole body halted and ate until not an ounce of carrion was left to the vultures. On the morning of the eighth day the last morsel of food bought from Ijolo's people was eaten. As if cynical Fate had decided that nothing should be lacking to render the company wretched, they were tantalized by the sight all around them of thriving life. Large herds of ostriches, eland, springbuck, and other kinds of animals that can exist for long periods without water were scattered over the country. Had they been able to catch a single one of these they would have regained new vigour and new hope, but armed only with a couple of clumsy arquebuses and a few swords they were as powerless to kill one as

an elephant is powerless to kill an eagle. The buck allowed them to come within a hundred yards, then galloped a little distance, wheeled snorting, watched them for a while, and trotted leisurely away as if mocking their misery. Birds flew from tree to tree. The ground was alive with insects. Every natural inhabitant of the wilderness thrived on its natural food, while the Portuguese, starving in the midst of life, quarrelled and fought for scraps of food that disgusted them even as they ate them.

On the ninth day after leaving Durban they reached the Tugela river. At sight of the broad stream a feeble cheer arose, and the whole company shambled forward, running in feeble spurts until they threw themselves down at the water's edge and drank and drank and drank again. For a few hours they rested, and then their hunger, which had redoubled since they slaked their thirst, spurred them to activity again. The river was too deep to ford, and they wearily set about collecting driftwood with which to build rafts. Two were made and blessed by Father Sebastian, who dedicated one to Our Lady of Succour and the other to Our Lady of Good Fortune, and on these they began to cross. All reached the further shore in safety except one man, a young cavalleiro. The raft on which he stood was badly managed, turned round and round in mid-stream, was caught in a current and swept downwards. Presently it drifted close to a bluff, swung round and round, then began to drift away again. All on board leapt for the shore except the cavalleiro. He

was standing on the farther side of the raft, which, relieved of his companions' weight, tilted and slid from beneath him.

"Save him! Save the young man, senhors," cried Father Sebastian, plunging chest deep back into the water, but the current had already carried the cavalleiro beyond reach. Unable to save the man's life, he bethought himself of his soul.

"Blessed Virgin of the Rosary, man's constant protectress in his greatest misery," cried the friar again, "hold up his head until I may relieve him of his weight of sin."

The cavalleiro was battling fiercely against the current, beating the water wildly in his attempts to swim. All marked the look of terror on his face. Father Sebastian raised a hand, made the sign of the cross in the air, and muttered —

"Absolvo te a peccatis tuis in nomine Patris —"

But before he could finish the formula, the beating hands and staring face had sunk out of sight.

North of the Tugela the country proved as dry and as barren of food as that to the south of the river had been, and the company straggled more than ever in the search, that continued from earliest daylight to the last glimmer of dusk, for the where-withal to sustain life. In this search no member of the company was more successful than John Temple. The Arab, who still made unconvincing protestations of love for him, was divided between his desire never to let the Englishman out of his sight and the grim necessity of finding food and water for himself.

It happened therefore that to gain these two ends he gave Temple the advantage of his knowledge of the country and of his experience. The Arab could find water where no one not bred in a desert would have thought of looking for it, and where he found it, there as a rule he found food. In a dry country, every pool of more or less permanent water is a centre of life, for although antelopes and other mammals can exist for days without water, many feebler animals must drink every day. The Arab knew this, and when he found a natural pool he called Temple, and the pair sat down by the side of it, confident that every snake and bird within a radius of many miles must visit it during the day. Of birds they caught not many, but few snakes escaped them, for a snake, being exceedingly deaf and not being able to see more than twice its own length, can of all moving animals be most easily killed.

John Temple gladly took advantage of the Arab's companionship. He was convinced that the man intended to kill him at the very earliest opportunity; but the partnership was too valuable to be refused, and he readily agreed that they should hunt together, on the understanding that the Arab never attempted to get behind his back, a stipulation which the Arab reluctantly observed after having once or twice, in consequence of disregarding it, felt the weight of the Englishman's fist.

Temple, like his fellow sufferers, exchanged what food he could spare for gold and jewels, but unlike

the majority of them he royally spent what he thus earned. If he found a man in sore need but without the means of purchasing food or water from the more fortunate, he gave him freely of whatever he had, or gave him a jewel with which to barter. This he did partly from sheer kindheartedness, partly from policy, for he kept ever in view the possibility of ultimately obtaining his freedom by earning the gratitude of those in power. Three people he took under his special protection — Henrique Ramires, whose good word was best worth having; Father Sebastian, whose gentle unselfish nature won the esteem of all decent members of the company; and Dona Beatriz Correa da Mattos, who had done him a small service in the palace of the Viceroy at Goa and a very great one in the hold of the sinking *Sao Raphael*.

Of these three the one that he most often helped was Dona Beatriz. Although this gentle lady soon learnt to pounce on a lizard or a locust, when she saw one, as eagerly as any of the men, she had been taught to look to others for help, and now would have looked in vain, so fierce was this grim and primitive struggle for existence, had not the Englishman befriended her, for her reputed prospective husband, Dom Vicente d'Alvarez da Saldanha, had abandoned all claim to the honour of protecting her.

One evening, after a day in which he had had no luck at all, Temple roasted his shoes in the ashes of a fire, and shared them with Dona Beatriz. Next

day there was no need to wander far afield in search of food. Within an hour of resuming the march those who were in the lead saw by the side of a muddy pool a score of vultures standing in a circle round what looked like a huge black boulder, but which they found to be the carcase of a newly-dead rhinoceros. The vultures, too gorged to fly, were easily killed, and those who had not the luck to get a share of the fresh meat feasted without restraint on the carrion.

It may be imagined that no dissenting voice was raised when it was proposed to celebrate the occasion by halting for the remainder of the day. After eating, the company joined with Father Sebastian in reciting a Litany, and then lay down under the trees to rest. Dona Beatriz, however, strengthened by a good meal (Temple had secured the tenderest part of one of the vultures for her), busied herself with cutting grass which she afterwards plaited into strands. These with much labour she wove into a pair of rough but serviceable sandals, and when she had accomplished the task, more or less to her satisfaction, she called John Temple to her side.

“Last night you shared your shoes with me, Senhor Englishman,” she said. “Perhaps these will serve to take their place.”

Temple examined the sandals, tried them on, took a step or two, and exclaimed—

“As good shoes as ever I wore! How did you learn to make them?”

“Need is a skilful teacher, and the nuns at Goa

taught me to use my fingers, though I never put them to such good use before."

Others crowded round the pair to examine the sandals, and very soon those of the company who had eaten or sold their shoes busied themselves with cutting grass and endeavoring, with very poor results, to make footgear for themselves. Dona Beatriz, pleased at her own success, offered to show them how to go to work, and would even have made sandals for some of the clumsiest had not Temple interfered.

"Would you give alms and go hungry yourself?" he protested. "Make sandals as fast as you like, but give them to me to sell for you, so that you may not fast when meat and water are sold for gold."

This was the beginning of a curious partnership between the two. Men whose feet were bruised and bleeding, readily exchanged for Dona Beatriz's sandals gold they had earned by finding food, gold which Temple wisely kept in his own hands. Henceforth the two shared a common purse. What with his skill in foraging and Dona Beatriz's success as a sandal-maker, the two were the best-fed members of the whole company. When Temple had luck in finding food the purse was not drawn upon. When he had none, he used their common stock of gold and jewels to buy food for both. When they had plenty, the pair gave of their abundance to those who needed it most.

The one who most often profited by their charity

was Henrique Ramires. In his search for food the grey-bearded lieutenant was handicapped by his age and still more by his efforts to keep the company together and preserve some semblance of order amongst them. Now in the lead to consult with the pilot as to the line of march, now in the rear to collect and encourage stragglers, he toiled all day, finding little time to care for his own needs in his anxiety for the welfare of those under him. At last his gallant heart could bear the dreadful strain no more. One day Temple, having had the luck to find a clayey spring, was hurrying back to the main body with a pot full of water and a wallet full of frogs and tiny land crabs, when he overtook the lieutenant lying prone upon the ground.

"Come, senhor!" he cried, "you are too far behind the company to rest. Take a drink and march on."

"I can march no more," replied the lieutenant, feebly; "leave me and go on."

"For the love of Heaven, senhor, rouse yourself. If not for your own sake, struggle on for the sake of the company, for without you to keep them together, this mongrel crew will perish miserably."

"Do you think I would endure the misery of this march for my own sake—I, who have no property but my sword, and nothing but a pauper's old age to look forward to?" replied the lieutenant; yet after he had drunk he rose to his feet, and, leaning on Temple's shoulder, stumbled forward.

For half a mile he struggled on, panting hard

and leaning more and more heavily; at last he blundered helplessly against a stone and fell once more.

“No use, senhor!” he cried faintly. “My sight is dimming fast. Quick; fetch the priest before I die.”

Temple laid him down and looked anxiously into his face. A grey pallor had spread over his cheek and his eyes were opaque and glassy. The lieutenant was utterly worn out. In spite of his age he had always set the example in any labour, and though his rank should have exempted him he insisted on carrying a load. He had borne, too, more than his share of anxiety, for while the rest of the company had been concerned only to save their own lives, on him had rested the anxiety of preserving the unity of the straggling column. To keep touch between those who marched in the lead and those who straggled behind, he had covered each day more ground than the boldest of those who ranged far afield for food and water. Like the hero he was he had worked while an ounce of strength remained in him. Now the night in which no man can work was fast descending upon him.

In a little while Temple returned with Father Sebastian, and went apart while the dying man confessed his sins and received the assurance of God’s forgiveness. When this was done the Dominican called him to come back to the lieutenant, and himself passed on out of sight.

“Senhor Englishman, I swore that you should

not hang if you acted faithfully. You have done your duty well, and had I lived to reach Sofala I would have recommended you for pardon and reward. Accept the good-will for the good deed and do me one last service. Here is my sword. Take it as a gift, and in return use it to save an old man from the bitterest agonies of death. I sent the priest away because he is too holy to understand a sinful man's weakness."

"My God! You ask too much, senhor!" cried Temple. "I will stay with you till the end, but I cannot kill you."

"You must not stay. For the sake of the rest of the company you must go forward. On you, and on the Arab, the safety of our companions depends, and each is useless without the other. As your officer I command you to go on. As a friend I pray you to save me from the agony of a lingering death."

Temple hid his face in his hands and groaned. Common sense and humanity bade him obey the dying man, but all his natural instincts revolted against the deed.

"Think, senhor," pleaded the lieutenant. "Though I can march no more I may live for hours, for days, in misery, and picture to yourself what the end would be."

There was a sound of heavily flapping wings. Temple looked up. A vulture had perched on the limb of a tree above them, and settled itself with the patient air of one who can afford to wait for that which cannot escape him.

"I have heard that they will peck a man's eyes out while he still lives," said the dying man.

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After performing his priestly duties, Father Sebastian had hurried on. When out of sight of the lieutenant, however, he lingered and looked back. There was no one in sight. He knelt and prayed.

Presently the sound of hurried footsteps disturbed him. Temple was hurrying towards him, stumbling as he walked, for his eyes were dim with tears and he was trembling as if with ague.

"Is he dead, senhor?" asked the priest, rising to his feet.

"He is dead, father," answered Temple.

For a while they went on together in silence.

"Would that you were a Catholic, my son," said the priest presently; "for I fear you need to be relieved of a mortal sin." A moment afterwards, a novel and daring thought struck him. "But perhaps God will understand," he added simply.

CHAPTER X

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN DOM BALTHAZAR D'ELVAS

AFTER the death of the lieutenant the last semblance of order was abandoned. Many threw away their loads of metal, and though the more prudent cursed them for their selfish folly, no attempt was made to punish them. The pilot, compass in hand, steered his course towards Sofala in his own interests, and the rest followed, herding together more by instinct than by discipline.

Two days later they crossed a river, wading neck deep. On the farther side they found a group of Kaffir huts, and at once those in the lead committed another of those mad undisciplined actions which even more than natural obstacles brought misery on the party. Without making any attempt to get the food they needed by honest barter, they burst into the village, clubbing the goats and overturning the granaries. A few natives who had been surprised in the huts darted away after a feeble bewildered protest and scattered among the fields.

"Catch those men before they rouse the tribe," shouted a cavalleiro who had more foresight than the rest, but even in pillage the misery-maddened crew failed to act in unison and the Kaffirs escaped un-

harméd. Every member of the company had enough to eat that night, but the meal was a dear one. While they ate in one cluster of huts, from another a mile distant war drums were signalling an alarm to the countryside, and when next morning the march was resumed watchers from the hill-tops marked their movements and shouted the news to each other. Within an hour bands of savages began to hover round them, and before noon it was clear that a fight was inevitable.

Fortunately for the Portuguese the sense of danger had kept them together, and, leaderless and undisciplined though they were, they formed a square on the summit of a steep hillock. The savages halted in front of them brandishing their spears and shouting defiance, then extending in a long line encircled the hillock and advanced to the attack. The Portuguese, half-starved and almost without arms, could have done little against the spears of the Kaffirs, and their earthly troubles would soon have been at an end had not the savages come on in so compact a body that even an arquebusier could not fail to hit them. Black Jorge, the gunner, having had the sense to expect trouble, had his piece loaded and his match alight. Resting his arquebus on a rock he fired into the brown of the advancing swarm with such good effect that, terrified by the discharge of the gunpowder, and seeing two of their number, struck apparently by magic, fall wounded, the savages wavered, gave away, and finally, after a discharge from the second arquebus, scattered in all directions.

The Portuguese raised a triumphant shout to see them go, but it soon seemed as if they had but exchanged a swift death for a lingering one. During the rest of that day, and for the next three days, though the Kaffirs did not attack again they hovered so closely on the flanks of the little column that no man dared stray in search of food. Each day, as soon as it was light enough to see, bands of savages took up positions behind and on each side of the company and throughout each day they dogged the Portuguese, patiently, mercilessly, never approaching to close quarters, but never falling far behind.

The column moved faster than it had done for weeks, partly from a desire to shake off the Kaffirs, but principally because, being of necessity huddled into a compact body, only those in the lead could hope to find food. Each man, therefore, made frequent desperate attempts to get ahead of his fellows. The pace became terrible for the weaker ones. On the second day a man fell down, crying to his fellows that he must rest or die, but the column passed on unheeding till a dreadful scream caused them to look back. The savages had overtaken the unhappy wretch and were jostling each other in their eagerness to stab him. With a cry of horror the Portuguese moved on faster than before.

It seemed to be the beginning of the end. Such chance scraps of food as the leaders found only seemed to sharpen their hunger. Man after man fell behind, yet stumbled and struggled after his

companions, crying to them to wait for him only for a minute, till the savages overtook him and he cried no more. The column moved like a herd of famished driven cattle, fearful of their drivers but looking all round for food as they go. Not one held out a hand to help a comrade, or suggested that the pace of the party should be regulated by that of its weaker members. Fear drove them from behind. Hunger led them forward. If a man fell down, those behind him stepped over his prostrate body and went on. "Thus they passed over each other without showing any signs of feeling, as if they had been a herd of irrational animals, their eyes and attention fixed upon the ground to see if they could discover herb, bone, or insect on which they might lay hands, even though it might be poisonous, and if any of these appeared, all rushed to seize it first; and there were often disputes between relations and friends over a locust, beetle, or lizard, so great was the want and suffering which made such base things of value."

In the centre of the struggling throng swayed the litter in which Dom Balthazar d'Elvas was carried. Again and again his bearers set him down and swore they would carry him no further, but each time he distributed gold and jewels in such profusion that greed overcame the fears and sufferings of his bearers and they carried him again. His store of wealth seemed inexhaustible. Five times had he given each of his bearers jewels enough to make him rich for life, yet whenever a man wished to sell a

root or a piece of carrion that he had found, the captain had been able to outbid all others.

On the evening of the third day, just as they were selecting a position for the camp, a convict found a leopard's head "very rotten and of an evil smell." He ate the tongue and sold the rest for twenty cruzados to Dom Balthazar, who boiled it in a pot, standing guard over it with drawn sword while it was cooking. While he was doing so, Father Sebastian entreated him to spare a little of the broth for Senhora Ribeiro, and received a blow for his pains. That night several of the cavalleiros debated among themselves whether the company would not profit if the captain were left behind. The captain's carriers, too, discussed a plan by which they might obtain the balance of his wealth without suffering any longer the heart-breaking toil of carrying him.

The leopard's head that Dom Balthazar refused to share with a woman afforded the last meal that he ever ate. Next day a swamp, in which channels of slimy green water wound around clumps of reeds, lay across the path of the column. Beyond it stretched the firm sand of the sea shore. Eager to reach the comparative safety of the beach, where they could be attacked only on one side, and to forage for food thrown up by the waves, the company plunged into the mud, and floundered about in search of a way across.

But the water was deep and the mud on the reedy islets too soft to afford foothold. In the

search for a ford the company gradually spread along the margin of the lake, floundering and splashing in the treacherous green slime, until the savages who were watching from a safe distance, thinking it a favourable moment to cut off stragglers, raised a shout and advanced to attack.

In this crisis "all ran together and all went upon their knees in prayer, begging Our Lady by her Holy Conception to obtain for them from her Glorious Son such another miracle as was wrought for the children of Israel in their going out of Egypt and their passage of the Red Sea, by showing them a road by which they might leave that place, and that they might find some means of subsistence to strengthen their almost failing spirits, and might not perish in such want. And as her office is to intercede for sinners, by her guidance they found a means of crossing the swamp. At this evident miracle they again knelt down and (not with dry eyes) rendered thanks to Our Lord for such a favour, and besides private vows they promised in the name of all a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadeloupe and a solemn High Mass, and the same in the first church dedicated to the Virgin which they should reach. And it fell out that the savages did not follow them and troubled them no more."

The last to cross were the men who had been carrying Dom Balthazar, but Dom Balthazar was not with them, and they had left the litter behind.

"Where is the captain?" asked one of the cavalleiros.

"The Kaffirs overtook us in the middle of the swamp and attacked us," replied one of the men sullenly, "and one threw a spear at the captain and killed him, so we left his body and ran."

An ominous silence fell over the company. Not a man doubted but that murder had been done, but there was none with authority to make inquiries, none to order the murderers to be punished, and none to carry out such an order if it were made. Presently a man rose to his feet and walked away, saying that the captain might be dead, but that for his part he meant to live, and was going to search for food. Another followed his example. Presently the whole company, forgetting everything but their most primitive needs, were scattered along the margin of the swamp and by the sea.

While hunting for frogs in the mud, Temple noticed one of the men who had helped to carry the captain call another, and after whispering together for a while the two waded back across the swamp together. That evening these two offered for sale lumps of flesh that was obviously not carrion.

"What meat is that?" asked one of the cavalheiros, suspiciously.

"Better meat than you have eaten for a long while," answered the convict with a brutal laugh. "If you won't buy, others will."

"The Kaffirs did not follow us into the swamp," remarked another cavalleiro, but no one answered him.

The group that had gathered round the two

convicts dispersed, none caring to look his neighbour in the face. Murder had been committed that day, and no one had protested, but the men had not yet sunk as low as openly to countenance cannibalism. Yet when darkness had fallen, and none could read the horror and disgust on each other's faces, the flesh found buyers.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHICH DOM VICENTE DEVISES A PLOT

DOM VICENTE lay long awake that night revolving many thoughts. It had occurred to him that if the company ever reached Sofala, whoever was their leader might reasonably expect honour and rewards. Dom Balthazar was dead. Why should not he, Dom Vicente, the highest in rank, take the dead captain's place? He would need to be able to put forward some claim to the gratitude of those in power, for circumstances had upset the original purpose for which he had joined the expedition. To obtain the captaincy of Sena, without the virtual promise of which he would not have left Goa, it was necessary to be the husband of Dona Beatriz, but Dom Vicente had excellent reason to suppose that as matters stood that lady would enter a convent or even starve rather than carry out her part of the arrangement. If he were not to be the captain of Sena it would be necessary to obtain some other lucrative post. Surely one would be given him if he were recognized as the leader of a party that had won its way, in spite of fearful difficulties and dangers, across more than two hundred leagues of unexplored land.

These reflections led on to a daring thought. Why should he despair of being appointed captain of Sena? The only thing that stood between him and the coveted post was Dona Beatriz's refusal to marry him. It was highly improbable, however, that the lady would ever live to reach Sofala. Day by day the hardships of the march were proving too great even for men. What chance was there of a woman winning through? If Dona Beatriz died, why should not he, when reporting himself to the Governor-General, declare that he had married her on the voyage, and claim the post in her name? It would be necessary to have witnesses to endorse his story — not too many, for there is danger in numbers when lies have to be sworn to — but these could be bought. The friar must be got rid of; but he was an old man, and the chances were against his living to see Sofala. One or two of the cavalheiros, also, seemed to be sentimental fools! On the whole, it would be better to reach safety accompanied only by convicts who for their own sakes would tell whatever tale he wished.

For an hour or more he lay elaborating schemes. Then he arose, stole quietly among the sleepers, and aided by the light of the dying fires at which some had cooked their horrible meal, found and roused a dozen of the sturdiest convicts, and leading them out of earshot suggested a plan for abandoning the rest of the party, pushing on alone, and representing themselves on reaching Sofala as the sole survivors of the ill-fated expedition. Very little

persuasion was needed to make the carefully selected gang of ruffians agree to such of the main outlines of Dom Vicente's scheme as he revealed to them; but there was some debate as to details. Several having sense enough to know their own helplessness without a guide, insisted that the pilot should be of the party, and after a long discussion the Italian was noiselessly aroused and invited to join the conspiracy. He was willing enough to throw in his lot with the gang on condition that Temple and the Arab were of the party, pointing out that it was necessary to have some one who could barter with the natives, since every attempt to take food by force had resulted in disaster.

Now Dom Vicente mentally classed Temple among the sentimental fools who might refuse to endorse his report to the Governor-General, but he recognized that he would be a valuable member of the party until Sofala was reached. It was possible, too, that being a man of resource he would, if left behind, find means ultimately to lead the rest of the company to Sofala, which would necessarily upset his own claims to the post he desired.

"Would he keep silence when we tell our tale?" objected the fidalgo. "He seems to have an eye for Dona Beatriz. Perhaps he might get soft-hearted and contradict our story in hopes that the Governor should send an expedition to look for the rest of the party."

"Perhaps he will die when we have no further

need of him," suggested one of the convicts with a laugh. "I for one have a knife."

"Why should there be any survivors to look for?" protested another convict. "Why should we not see to it that our tale is true? Consider! The cavalleiros have been as keen to find food and as keen to sell it for jewels as any of us. We who carried the captain know it well, for half the jewels he gave us went into their pockets to buy food for our bellies. Half the men we leave behind have their pockets full of gold. Are we to turn our backs on it? Need we go in fear lest the others should reach Sofala after all and bring our necks within reach of the halter, when ten minutes' quick work will put the gold in our pockets and us out of danger of having our tale upset? Call away the Englishman, wait for the first gleam of light — the dawn is nearly here — and then kill them swiftly as they lie."

The plot was admirably conceived. Unfortunately for the conspirators, it had been planned in the dark. It happened that when Dom Vicente had stolen among the sleepers, choosing his companions, he had had the misfortune to stumble against Temple's legs. The Englishman, ever on his guard against a midnight visit from the Arab, had awakened in time to see men leave the camp, and had had the curiosity silently to join them. While the plot was under discussion he had formed one of the circle, lying on the ground lest his figure, outlined against the firelight beyond, should

be recognized, and had heard every word that passed.

Now, Temple was an honest, kindly-hearted man, but, like the boatswain in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, there was, at that time at least, no one of that company whom he loved more dearly than himself. The convicts' suggestion to murder the sleepers in cold blood horrified him, but his first action was mainly prompted by the knowledge that he must fight for his life as soon as the conspirators knew that he had overheard a plot one of the details of which so greatly concerned himself.

Rising to his feet with as careless an air as he could assume and endeavouring to disguise his voice, he muttered that he would fetch the Englishman. Unfortunately, as he did so the first puff of the dawn wind fanned the fires so that the flickering flame lit up his face.

"It is the Englishman himself," cried Dom Vicente. "He has overheard. Kill him before he arouses the others!"

A burly convict sprang at him, knife in hand. Temple drew his sword, the sword that Henrique Ramires had carried for so many honourable years, and sent it home into the man's ribs.

"Awake! awake! Help! To me, all honest men!" he cried, jerking out the blade and running backwards. "Awake for your lives!"

For the next two minutes there was a bewildering scrimmage, in which no one knew exactly whom he hit, still less why he hit. As one sleeper

after another leapt to his feet, he saw that Temple was being attacked, and as the Englishman never stopped yelling "Awake for your lives," they concluded that they could best save their own skins by taking his side. Some drew their knives and stabbed blindly at those who were attacking him, but more fought with their bare hands, clutching at the convicts' throats. Black Jorge clubbed his arquebus and felled two, and Furtado, one of the cavalleiros, neither seeing nor caring whom he struck, drove a blazing firebrand full into Dom Vicente's face. The fidalgo stepped backwards to avoid the blow, tripped and fell, and in another moment such of the rest of the conspirators as remained on their feet were penned together and surrounded by men who, though they knew not in the least what the trouble was about, were ready to obey Temple's command to brain the first one who moved.

"You, Dom Vicente, stand up and step forward two paces. Senhor Furtado, kindly bind his hands. Jorge will hold them for you," said Temple in tones of command that no one seemed concerned to challenge. "Now you, Gomez, step forward. Bind his hands, Senhor Ferao and Senhor de Paz, if you please."

It was long since any member of the company had taken any orders from any one, but the Englishman was obeyed with as little question as if he had had the King of Portugal's commission in his pocket. When all the conspirators had been securely bound Temple described the plot they had hatched and how

he came to overhear it. The prisoners themselves sat sullenly mute, realizing that nothing was to be gained by denying the story.

"And now," continued Temple, when he had finished his explanation of the incident, "you see what comes of having no leader. We are all like brute beasts, each man thinking only of himself, instead of loyally supporting and succouring his fellows. Henceforth I will be your leader. Let every man take notice of what I say, for I will say nothing but I will answer it before God. We are very far from help. We have only such food as the desert affords. We are in a savage land and surrounded on every side by dangers. We must have these evils that have grown among us redressed, for by the life of God it takes my wits from me to think of it. We must adopt a new plan. The cavalleiro and the convict, the man with gold in his wallet and the man with none, must work together for the common welfare. Let us show ourselves to be one in heart under God and work each according to his strength for the safety of the whole. As God shall help me I will serve you faithfully, but I take Him to witness that I will kill, without hesitation or remorse, the man who disobeys me. Does any man challenge me? If so, let him do so now."

There was silence. No man cared to face the Englishman single-handed, and all the most sensible members of the column recognized both that their safety demanded that they should have a leader and that none was better fitted for the post.

If Temple had laid deep schemes to make himself leader of the party — and since the death of Ramires he had seen that sooner or later they must have a strong leader or perish miserably — he could not have declared himself at a more opportune moment. The deliberate murder of Dom Balthazar, followed swiftly by the almost open cannibalism of some of the party, had awakened in the minds of the majority a horror that reached its culminating point when they realized how nearly the plot of Dom Vicente and his gang had succeeded. For the perils natural to their situation there was no remedy, but they felt the need of protection from peril born of the greed and bestial selfishness of their own selves.

“Listen, then,” continued Temple, “while I give my orders. I spare these men’s lives” — he pointed to the crestfallen gang of conspirators — “because they will be useful as burden-bearers. They shall carry such metal as there is still amongst us. They shall march in single file, the pilot at their head to give us the course, and twice each day I will appoint twelve men to guard them lest they seek to do us evil. The rest of you, in parties of three, shall search for the food we so sorely need. Each party is to be within sight of, but as far as conveniently may be from, the party to the right and to the left of it. There is to be no more selling of food. If a man finds food he shall bring it to me to be distributed. If he find more than he can carry, he is to report to me at once. If food is sold and I come to hear of it, the buyer and the seller shall be flogged on the

first offence and hanged on the second. So also will I deal with any man who, without my consent, enters a Kaffir's hut or has intercourse with a Kaffir, for it may be that the greed of one man will bring ruin on us all. If any man learns that these rules are broken let him report to me, and he shall have the offender's share of food for one day as reward. If, on the other hand, he fails to report and I come to hear of it, he shall be flogged. Lastly, no man shall be abandoned unless safe amongst friendly natives, and as for the women and child, they shall not be abandoned at all while there remain enough of us with strength to carry them."

History teaches that the best thing that can happen to a lawless rabble is to fall under the power of a benevolent despot. In Temple's rule despotism at first was more apparent than benevolence, yet he was obeyed, for whenever he punished a man the rest approved, knowing that the punishment was not only just but expedient. Within a few hours of the time when the party had accepted his leadership a cavalleiro, who had lagged behind the rest of his party in the search for food, was denounced for keeping to himself the discovery of a cluster of mussels on the shore. All supposed that Temple would have too much respect for the cavalleiro's rank to subject him to the indignity of a flogging, but they were wholesomely surprised to see him receive a severe thrashing. His denouncer, unfortunately, not having been accustomed to receive justice at the hands of his superior officers, forthwith got

the idea that Temple, being a convict himself, intended to favour his fellows at the cost of the cavalleiros. Next day he appropriated food, was flogged, tried to knife the flogger, and within a few more minutes was hanged by the neck from a baobab tree as an example and a warning to others. From that day onward until the Englishman himself disobeyed his own iron rules no man earned punishment.

Since crossing the swamp, the Kaffirs who had dogged them thus far had ceased to molest them, so that the company was once again able to extend in search of food. The advantage of the organized search immediately became apparent. Advancing as they did in a long line, much food was found that would have been missed by men each of whom was acting independently. Hitherto, when a man found a pool he had kept the knowledge of it to himself, so that he might sell the water obtained from it. Now, when a pool was found, all were called to it, and when the whole company had drunk, if the pool were a small one all waded into it, so that any fish it might contain, suffocated by the mud stirred up, should leap on to the bank. The trick was explained to Temple by a man who, before embarking on a career of crime, had herded cattle in the Lusitanian hills, and had often caught himself a meal of fish by driving his cattle through the ponds at which he watered them. Even in the hunting of frogs it was found that three pair of hands acting in concert were more than three times as successful as one pair would have been. On one occasion, too,

a party startled a warthog. No three men could have hoped to catch it, but the finders hailed the parties to right and left of them. The whole long line converged. The pig was driven into a marsh and held at bay there while Black Jorge brought the cumbrous machinery of his arquebus into motion and shot it.

One day, a week after Temple had assumed command, towards the middle of the afternoon, those in the lead turned back with news that Kaffir huts were in sight. As before, Temple ordered the company to close in, halt, and prepare for an attack while he, accompanied by the Arab and a small guard, went forward to treat for food.

The main body waited for two weary hours; how impatiently, only those who have suffered semi-starvation can realize. "No lovelorn swain in lady's bower e'er panted for the appointed hour" with half such longing as those desperately hungry men awaited the results of Temple's negotiations. To give edge to their impatience, pots of food — mussels, oysters, dead starfish, crabs, octopods and sea slugs — stood ready for the daily distribution, yet so strict was Temple's rule that no one dared eat so much as a single mussel.

At last Ferao, who had been left in command of the main body, grew anxious, and sent forward a couple of scouts with orders to approach the huts cautiously and find out, if they could do so without being seen, whether anything had gone wrong. They returned with the report that Temple and his

guard were seated talking to at least a score of natives, and that so far as they could judge all was going well.

"I expect that cursed Englishman is enjoying himself with a rib of fat goat. When he has eaten we may have the scraps," grumbled one of the men. "Let us at least start to cook what we've got, senhor."

"If you want a flogging you may help yourself," replied Ferao curtly. "Have patience."

They beguiled the time by speculating what Temple would bring them. When this meagre topic failed, unable to concentrate their minds on any subject not connected with food, they wistfully discussed with elaborate detail meals they had eaten in happier days. From time to time one jumped on to a rock, and strained his eyes towards the huts.

"Here comes some one," cried one of the watchers at last. "Senhor de Paz. He is running."

"Stand to your arms! There may be trouble," cried Ferao, despite the fact that few had any arms more effective than a knife. "What is it, senhor? Is all well?"

"All's well, senhor," replied the cavalleiro, as he ran up, panting. "Except that these men don't care for metal. They want cloth. A pound of iron will fetch no more than a pot of meal. You are to send two more loads of metal, and if any man has a shirt, you are to send it too. Meanwhile, you can light fires. There will be food enough to cook directly."

Among the whole company three ragged and very filthy shirts were found. Dom Vicente's, which was one of them, had to be stripped from that gallant gentleman by force. Senhor de Paz returned with these, accompanied by two men carrying loads of copper. Fires were lighted, and another weary hour passed. The sun set. The air ceased quivering, and distant objects took their natural shape. The sky turned from a sheet of shimmering grey steel to a limpid pool of ether, in which the tenderest shades of the opal played. The waiting men had no eyes for it. Their whole thoughts were dominated by the desire for food. The violet pall of night swept across the sky. A guard was set, and the rest fretted impatiently round the fires waiting for their meal.

At last came the sound of footsteps, talk, and laughter, — the first laughter these men had heard for many a long day.

"Good food, and plenty for all," cried Temple, hurrying up to the party, and throwing the carcase of a newly-killed goat down by the nearest fire; "and better still, good news. Ten days' march to the northwards is the bay of Espirito Santo. There is a Portuguese ship there, trading cloth for ivory with a savage king they call Inyaka. I have already hired a man to go swiftly with a letter to the captain of the ship, entreating him to send men to meet us, and if he cannot do that, at least to delay sailing till we reach him."

"It hath pleased God to forgive us the sins for which He has justly punished us," cried Father

Sebastian, holding up his hand. "Now let us thank Him who hath brought us through so many and so great dangers."

Next morning no man suggested that they should halt and rest. Before the freshness of dawn had given way to glaring, scorching day, the dead fires of the camping ground were left a good league behind.

CHAPTER XII

THROUGH GREAT TRIBULATION

“ Their children shall die starving in their sight,
Who were in such affection bred and born ;
They shall behold by Caffres’ grasping might
Her clothing from the lovely lady torn ;
Shall see her form, so beautiful and white,
To heat, cold, wind, exposed and all forlorn,
When she has trod, o’er leagues and leagues of land
With tender feet upon the burning sand.”

Aubertin’s translation of Camoens’s “ Lusiad.”

Canto V. verse 47.

For three days they marched through populous country. At each halt Temple bartered metal for food, till on the third day the last pound of copper was exchanged for corn, and each man carried a seven days’ supply of meat and grain. The end being in sight he could afford, or thought he could afford, to be reckless, and in his eagerness to avoid delay he gave the savages almost as much as these wily children of nature demanded at the beginning of each negotiation.

A native guide led them during these three days. On the morning of the fourth he refused to continue, saying that for the next three days’ march to the northward there was no water. No promise could

induce him to go further. Nothing that any of the party possessed could tempt him. He was promised that if only he would lead them to the ship he should help himself to as much of its cargo as he could carry, but unfortunately he had had experience of Portuguese trading methods and preferred cash to credit.

The party had been accompanied from village to village by a swarm of unofficial guides who had kept with the Portuguese partly from lack of any more interesting method of passing their time, partly from a vain hope that these members of a race that they knew to possess many wonderful treasures would at some happy moment produce cloth and beads for distribution. In vain Temple offered these men the same reward as he had offered to the hired guide. They declared that apart from being waterless the country on ahead was bewitched. The track ran along innumerable rough hills, each of which was the abode of an evil spirit. No man could pass through it without suffering and probable danger. They willingly gave many directions as to the path, but beyond setting the company a mile or so on its way they would do nothing.

If Temple could have got any one of these men out of sight of his fellows he would without hesitation have forced him to guide the party, but though several cautious attempts were made to segregate a single individual, the crowd hung most annoyingly together. Unable to arrest the whole lot, and unwilling to incur the danger of being attacked, he reluctantly gave the order to march, after seeing that each member

of the party was provided with as much water as he had means of carrying.

The guide's directions as to the road before them were copious, but not precise. When he had said that the waterless country before them stretched for a three days' march he had meant three such forced marches as an active man would make. Naturally enough he had not taken into consideration the fact that men who are worn with hardship cannot march at the same rate as a single man well fitted for such an ordeal. At the end of three strenuous days there was no sign of water. Worse still, the most reckless members of the company had had no water for the last twenty-four hours, for on a long march it needs better discipline than Temple could enforce to restrain a rash and thirsty man from drinking the water he is carrying. Temple himself had had little to drink for forty-eight hours, for Dona Beatriz's supply had been stolen during the night that followed the first days' march through the desert, and he had given her more of his store than he had drunk himself.

Throughout these three days the company marched in single file instead of widely extended in search of food and water as it had marched before reaching the last Kaffir tribe. Food they did not need, for they had amply sufficient for the moment, and the appearance of the country confirmed the guide's assertion that no water would be found until the hills were passed. In the lead marched the pilot, his fellow prisoners and the men who guarded them, followed by the rest of the company in what order

they pleased. The rear was brought up by Temple, who marched behind in order to encourage stragglers and to regulate the pace of the column by the needs of its weakest members.

On the fourth day the company began to straggle. Those in the lead, in their anxiety to relieve the agonies of thirst, pushed on rapidly till they were so far ahead that Temple could no longer control their movements from the rear. The men in charge of the prisoners, their fears of the Englishman overcome by their own sufferings, left the latter to their own devices and pushed on independently, careless whether they accompanied them or not. The prisoners, equally anxious to get to the water, followed the example of their guards and hurried forward, so they, their guards, and the rest of the company became intermingled, passing and repassing each other in the race for water, and by noon a mile or more separated the man who was furthest ahead and him who lagged furthest behind.

Fortunately for those in the rear, they could find their way without the help of the pilot. The greater part of Africa from the Soudan to the Cape is covered with a vast network of narrow paths trodden hard and distinct by thousands upon thousands of naked feet. In the habitable parts these paths cannot be used by strangers who have no guide, for every mile or so other paths lead out of them or cross them, but in very dry country a single unmistakable path stretches from one water to the next, without any confusing branches. The company had been

shown a path by the guide who refused to accompany them and they had followed it throughout the three days without any hesitation or difficulty.

The path on the fourth day led along the backbone of a range of hills. At first as they walked their eyes searched the hollows on either side in hope of seeing something — a Kaffir hut, a patch of green, a water-loving tree — that would give hopes of that which they needed so sorely. Later on their whole thoughts and their whole energies were concentrated on reaching the pool of water of which the guide had told them before their strength failed. They were racing over an unknown course to an unknown goal hidden somewhere among the grey hills ahead. None knew how far ahead the goal lay, but each knew that he must reach it soon or die. Therefore, as runners that race for a prize, they kept their eyes on the path ahead of them and hurried unceasingly on.

Their eyeballs ached. Their temples throbbed. A loathsome black sticky slime formed on their tongues, their palates, and their lips, so that they were fain now and again to pluck stiff blades of coarse dry grass and scrape it away. Their throats were inflamed. Fever coursed like fire through every limb.

Occasionally for short intervals their overstrained brains found a dreadful relief in temporary madness. Some burst into song, the words rising from their parched throats like the hoarse croaking of a carrion crow. Some talked on trivial topics with men who

had died when the *Sao Raphael* went down, as if the dead were marching beside them. Some cried that they saw water on ahead and broke for a moment into a feeble run. But in each case the delirium passed quickly away, giving place to miserable sanity, pain and despair.

At one place the path dipped and crossed a narrow gully such as runs with water during, and for a few hours after, heavy rain. Temple drew his sword and dug frantically, in wild hopes of finding water beneath the sandy bed. The others passed him by, not even turning their heads to see what he was doing. Senhor Ribeiro passed, tottering and swaying under the weight of his little son, who, perched on his shoulders, clung to his head and cried. A few paces behind, his wife stumbled on in the tattered tunic and breeches which she had worn since the wreck. She slipped on a loose stone in the torrent bed, fell on hands and knees, but without pausing a moment struggled to her feet and staggered forwards. Father Sebastian passed, his hands clasped before him, and his lips muttering prayers. Dona Beatriz passed. Her hair hung in a dirty clammy tangle on the shoulders of her boy's doublet. Her beautiful eyes were dull and blood-shot. Her mouth gaped open. Her lips had cracked, and the blood, drying as it rose, had attracted a swarm of flies which buzzed about her mouth and nostrils. In single file they passed, man and woman, convict and cavalleiro. Some moved with less effort than others, but each swayed and

staggered as he hurried on. Then Temple's sword struck fire against the rock bottom of the shallow gully, and abandoning his useless task he hurried after the others.

Very soon afterwards, just as the path began to wind downhill towards a distant plain, Senhor Ribeiro heard a bitter wail behind him. Turning, he saw his wife face downwards with arms outstretched on the path. Putting down the boy, he strove to lift her, but she hung limp and senseless in his arms. Taking her head in his lap he wiped the foam from her mouth, kissed her, and called to her beseechingly, uselessly, to rouse herself and make another effort, but the strain had been too great, and the poor lady's life was flickering away. He laid her tenderly down, buried his head in his arms, and cried.

Till then Dona Beatriz had kept up with feverish energy, but the example of the dying woman robbed her of all the little strength she had left. Sinking down on the path, she sat still and stared with unseeing eyes at the plain below.

Senhor Furtado and another cavalleiro overtook her, turned aside off the path and passed on. Dona Beatriz, roused to a sense of her desperate plight, held out her hands towards them and cried —

“Ah! senhors, will you leave me to perish miserably in the wilderness? Have you no compassion on a young girl, a Portuguese like yourselves?”

Not many weeks before Senhor Furtado had sworn, “Not while I have strength to lift my hand



“ ‘You will not leave me !’ she cried.”

will I see a lady of Portugal abandoned," and his companion had echoed assent. When those valiant words were uttered the speakers had meant them. Both would then have died gladly rather than be false to them, but long weeks of misery had sapped their courage, their manliness, their nobility, just as semi-starvation had weakened their bodies. The long, grim struggle for existence had undermined their moral natures until in this fiercest and grimmest struggle for life they had no more human sympathy than wolves who pull down and kill a feeble member of their pack.

"God forgive you and bring you to your homes," cried the unhappy lady as they left her behind.

"You will not leave me!" she cried, hope rising again as Temple reached her, but the Englishman's strength was all but spent. His courage had all gone, and only the desperate instinct of a wounded animal that goes forward till it drops sustained him. He stepped aside and passed her by. One man after another passed her unheeding. Last of the file came Father Sebastian. His head was bowed. His gait was feeble. But he, unlike the others, could forget his own misery in compassion for others. Constant fasting, constant penance, had steeled his nerves to endure privation, and the lifelong habit of sacrificing himself for others had so developed his love and pity that even in this supreme crisis he could forget his own desperate needs.

"Take comfort, my daughter," he said, seating himself and putting his arm tenderly round her

shoulders. "God would not permit you to suffer such misery on earth except to prepare you for life everlasting. I will stay with you till you are stronger. If God wishes us to die, why then we shall sooner stand before His glorious throne. If He wishes us to live, be sure He can save us."

A wild cry echoed from the path below them. Senhor Ribeiro was standing over the prostrate body of his wife, wringing his hands and moaning. Suddenly he grasped his little son in his arms, and turning with a wild and ghastly laugh, raced down the hillside. They saw him leap from rock to rock, then fall and roll, his son still in his arms, down and down, faster and faster, till he disappeared, and silence fell over the dry hillside.

The friar rose and went to cover the dead lady's face.

"See how merciful God is," he said with a smile. "They loved each other dearly, and in their death they are not divided."

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They found water less than five miles from where Senhora Ribeiro had died.

Each man as he reached the stream threw himself on his face and, reckless of consequences, drank till he gasped for breath, drank again, then staggered into the nearest shade to rest. Temple was the last of the company to reach the water. His desert training warning him of the danger of excess in drinking, he first merely washed out his mouth and took a small gulp of water, waited five minutes and drank again.

Then after a longer interval he took a deep satisfying draught and sprang to his feet.

"Come, men," he said, "we must bring on those poor ladies before our muscles stiffen. Who will come back with me?"

Not a man stirred. Most of them were writhing with the pains induced by inordinate drinking after excessive thirst.

"If no one will volunteer, I must pick my man," continued Temple, looking round the company to see who had best come through the ordeal. His eye fell on Black Jorge, the gunner, whose strain of African blood had helped to sustain him through the hardships of the march. "Jorge, draw water and come with me."

The mulatto limped to the stream with a muttered oath, and filled his gourd.

"Senhor Furtado, you will camp here," continued the Englishman. "I doubt if we shall be able to rejoin you to-night. We will rest to-morrow, and march again the next day."

The next day's sun had risen some hours before Temple and Jorge returned to the pool with Dona Beatriz and the priest, for the former could walk but slowly, and was obliged to rest frequently on the way. They had delayed, too, to cover the body of Senhora Ribeiro with heavy stones. The bodies of her husband and little son had to be left to the vultures, for, after a long search, they saw them lying in an inaccessible position far down the hill.

As they neared the stream, Black Jorge, who was in the lead, turned to Temple and said —

“They have gone on, senhor. I see no one at the camp.”

“May the curse of God fall on them if they have,” cried the Englishman, bitterly. “Hurry on, man, and see. No, stay with me. You may take it into your head to turn traitor next.”

A few yards farther on they saw Senhor Furtado coming towards them.

“What has happened, in Heaven’s name?” shouted Temple. “Have you been attacked?”

“They would not wait, senhor. They said that the ship the guide told us of might sail without us if they did not hurry on.”

“And you let them go? Curse you for a cowardly hound!”

“We tried to stop them.”

“Who do you mean by ‘we’?”

“Senhor Dias, Senhor de Paz, Senhor da Cunha, and I. Dom Vicente stabbed Senhor da Cunha with his knife when he tried to hold him back. We went to plug his wound, but he died in a few moments, and when we looked again they had gone.”

“Then all have gone but you three?”

“We three and the Arab. He did not go. They are waiting in the shade yonder.”

Temple sat down by the side of the stream, and for half an hour spoke no more. Then he rose and said —

"I could have done no more than you did. Forgive me, senhor. Come. We must march."

They followed the continuation of the path that had led them to the stream. Five days later, led by a native guide whom they had hired with the least valuable of the knives belonging to the party, they reached the village of Inyaka, the chief of whom they had been told.

Inyaka could hardly have greeted the King of Portugal with more barbaric ceremony. Warned of their approach while they were still a day's march away (he is a clever man who can approach the village of an African chief unheralded), he sent to meet them a bodyguard under one of his headmen, who could speak a few words of broken Portuguese and imagined himself master of the whole language. The bodyguard lifted the weary men, and Dona Beatriz too, shoulder high, and chanting an endless song carried them forward at a rate of five good miles an hour. At the royal village itself a hundred headmen stood in a half-circle to greet the wanderers. Old men spread mats for them to sit on, women offered them huge earthenware pots that contained more native beer than they could have drunk in a week. Inyaka himself met them at the gate of the royal enclosure, clapping his hands and shouting a lengthy welcome that came to an end only when he was obliged to pause for breath.

As soon as he could make himself heard above the hubbub, Temple told the Arab to ask the

whereabouts of the Portuguese ship which they had been told was anchored near the village. For answer Inyaka led them to the summit of a low hill and pointed eastwards. Below them stretched the wide estuary known then as Santo Espirito, but now called Delagoa Bay, and a mile beyond the shore lay the ship. While they stood looking the clanking sound of a slowly hoisted cable came faintly across the water. Before they understood what caused the noise a huge mainsail, blazoned with the arms of Portugal, spread to the wind. Another sail was spread, and another. The ship began to move, gathered way, and, turning, headed seaward.

CHAPTER XIII

DOM VICENTE TELLS HIS TALE

SEBASTIAN, the boy King of Portugal, who under the influence of priestly tutors, conceived the project of waging war on Monomatapa was, of all the great European sovereigns of his day, the one least likely successfully to carry through so great and difficult an enterprise. The boy was a royal Don Quixote. He had all the gallantry, all the enthusiasm, all the sterling sincerity of Cervantes' immortal dreamer and as little sense as he of the realities of life.

The project of sending an army into the interior of Africa and conquering a savage king who was reputed to reign over the greater part of that continent south of the equator, and to rank among African potentates second only to the mysterious Prester John, appealed to the boy's religious enthusiasm, because, in the first place, by so doing he would avenge the death of Dom Gonzalo, the missionary martyr whom Monomatapa had murdered; in the second place, because by making Monomatapa's realms Christian, and uniting them to the Christian kingdom of Prester John, he would

establish the power of the Catholic Church throughout the greater part of Africa; in the third place, because the wealth of Monomatapa's gold mines was reputed to be so enormous that it would suffice to pay the cost of subduing the whole of Asia. In short, if the Monomatapa were conquered it would become possible, so King Sebastian thought, to establish Portuguese dominion in fact as well as in theory over all lands from the Cape of Good Hope to the easternmost islands of Japan, and in so doing bring half the world within the fold of the Church of Christ.

The idea was just such an one as would suggest itself to the mind of an imaginative child, and like a child Sebastian did little more than command that the attempt should be made before turning his attention, once more, to what he conceived to be his life's work — the rousing of Christendom to destroy the Khalif and all followers of the false prophet.

In Lisbon there was no lack of men eager to join the expedition, for though few of his subjects had King Sebastian's enthusiasm for holy wars, none were indifferent to the prospect of fingering Monomatapa's gold. Noblemen were appointed to posts in the expedition whose sole claim to consideration was possession of wealth and influence. The rank and file were ruffians whose only qualification was that those charged with keeping the king's peace were anxious to be rid of them.

Before leaving the organization of the expedition to others, King Sebastian did one wise and one very

unwise thing. He gave the command to Francisco Barreto, a man of not very high rank, but as capable, as honest and as loyal a soldier as ever drew sword. Having chosen as commander the most efficient man in his dominions, King Sebastian then proceeded to tie his hands by appointing a council of twenty priests to sail with the expedition, and commanded Barreto to do nothing without their consent. One of these priests was Father Monclaros, a Jesuit, who had been one of the king's own tutors, and it would have been well for the expedition if Barreto had found some excuse for hanging this man at his masthead while still on his way to the Cape.

The Viceroy of India was commanded to supply the expedition with horses, camels, stores, and ammunition, but, as we have already seen, the order was easier to issue than to carry out. When Barreto reached Mozambique, instead of finding three ship-loads of stores awaiting him he found only a letter from the Viceroy announcing the departure of the *Sao Raphael*, and of the *Sao Raphael* there was no trace.

Barreto, however, was not the man to remain idle and wait for better luck. After landing all the men he did not need for the moment, including the members of the council (whom he could well spare), he paid a flying visit to all the Arab settlements along the east coast, by virtue of his office as "Captain-General and Conqueror of the kingdoms lying between Capo das Correntes and that of Guardafui," buying at his own price what he needed

from those who would sell, and taking by force from those who would not.

On his return to Mozambique, Barreto found that most of the members of his council, disliking the heat, the flies, and the poor food they had found there, were already heartily sick of Africa, and filled with a project to sail to India for the purpose of relieving Chaul, which was still besieged. While this matter was being debated, however, a ship arrived from Portugal with more men, and another from India, which Dom Luiz had dispatched some three months after the sailing of the *Sao Raphael*, carrying the stores, horses, and ammunition which Barreto needed, and a number of new members for the council whom he would gladly have done without. The latter, not as yet having had their enthusiasm for the African expedition damped, outvoted the others, and preparations for a march inland were begun.

Two ports were suggested as a base of operations — Sofala and Quelimane; the latter because it lay at the mouth of the Zambesi, up which river the expedition might sail in small boats; the former because it was the nearest port to Monomatapa's kingdom. Most members of the council wished to start from Sofala, but Monclaros, for various reasons which he revealed to his colleagues and others which he kept to himself, wished it to start from Quelimane.

Matters had reached this point when a small Portuguese vessel that had been trading along the

coast returned to Mozambique, having on board Dom Vicente, five other cavalleiros, the pilot of the *Sao Raphael*, three seamen, and sixteen convicts, who declared themselves to be the sole survivors of the ill-fated ship which should have carried stores for Barreto. After these men had performed the religious exercises expected of men who have had a miraculous escape from death, Monclaros sought an early opportunity of winning their leader over to his side, hoping that he would be able to give reasons, derived from his supposed knowledge of the country, which should dissuade the council from adopting the Sofala route. The fact that Dom Vicente, having been picked up at a point many leagues to the south of Sofala, knew nothing whatever of the country at the back of that port, was a detail that might be trusted to escape the notice of the learned theologians who complicated Barreto's plans.

The Jesuit found Dom Vicente to be a most satisfactorily earnest ally. The latter did not in the least wish to undergo the hardships of a campaign. On the other hand, he very earnestly wished to be established as Captain of Sena, a post which he claimed by representing himself to be the husband of Dona Beatriz, who he declared had succumbed to the hardships of the overland march. As the fort of Sena was situated on the Zambesi River, the expedition would pass it if the Quelimane route were adopted, and Barreto would have an opportunity of establishing Dom Vicente there.

If the Sofala route were adopted, however, he would have to wait indefinitely for the post and would certainly be expected to join the expedition in the meanwhile.

Now, Dom Vicente and the Jesuit were both men of the world, and each quickly realized that the other had reasons which he did not disclose for wishing Barreto to follow the Zambesi route. Recognizing each other as kindred spirits, it was not long before they were plotting together, with a show of frankness, to gain their own ends. The priest had made overtures by saying that in advocating the Zambesi route he was influenced by the hope of passing the spot at which Dom Gonzalo was murdered and of securing that martyr's bones as a priceless possession for the cathedral church in Goa. He now admitted that he was even more concerned by the hope of advancing his Order, to the detriment of the Dominicans. King Sebastian, in hopes of preventing quarrels between the rival Orders, had assigned the territory around Sofala as a field of labour to the Dominicans and that between Quelimane and Mozambique to the Jesuits. If Sofala became the port for the wealth of the Monomatapa, explained Monclaros, the Dominicans would profit; whereas if Quelimane was made the port, the Jesuits at Mozambique would have the handling of the Monomatapa's gold. Dom Vicente repaid this confidence by admitting his desire to get himself established as Captain of Sena. The Jesuit promised to endorse the fidalgo's claims to the office, and it

was agreed that Dom Vicente should declare the country behind Sofala to be dry and barren and utterly unfit for the passage of a large expedition.

Now, Dom Vicente had another reason, which he did not reveal to the Jesuit, for not wishing Barreto to use Sofala as his base. Though he hoped that Dona Beatriz was dead, it was possible that she was still alive. If this were the case, it was probable that she would sooner or later arrive at Sofala. If she arrived there after Barreto had gone up country, leaving Dom Vicente to handle the revenues at Sena, it would matter little; he would make a comfortable fortune before being turned out of the post. It was possible, however, that she might reach Sofala before the expedition had left that port, if it went by that route, in which case he would have to abandon all hopes of securing the lucrative post which he had crossed the Indian Ocean to obtain.

Father Monclaros, too, had a reason which he did not disclose for promising to advance Dom Vicente's interest. Accustomed to read men's faces as a sailor reads the sky, he knew before he had talked with him an hour that the cavalleiro was haunted by a fear that he had not disclosed. What it was he did not ask, being confident that it would sooner or later be revealed in the confessional either by Dom Vicente himself, or by one of those who had survived the march from Natal. Now, in capable hands, a man who has a guilty conscience is an amenable tool, and as a tool in a high position is more valuable than a tool in a low one, Monclaros

determined to advance Dom Vicente's interest to his utmost, and at the same time to use the man for his own ends.

Soon after their first meeting the priest suggested to Dom Vicente the possibility that one day he might advance from the post of Captain of Sena to that of Governor of East Africa.

"You mean if any misfortune should happen to Senhor Barreto while on the campaign?" asked the fidalgo.

"Or if his Majesty, whom may God guard, should see fit to recall him," replied the priest. "Come with me to the house of Senhor Brandao, and we will discuss the chances of such an event."

Antonio Pereira Brandao belonged to the type of official to whom, more than to any other cause, the downfall of Portugal's power in Asia and Africa is to be attributed. He had been Governor of the Moluccas, and while in that post had had neither the sense to be moderate in peculation, nor the craft to avoid detection. Dom Luiz d'Ataide, the Viceroy at Goa, had arrested him for fraud and sent him to Lisbon to stand his trial. The Court at Lisbon had confiscated all his property and condemned him to serve for life as a common soldier in the African expedition, but Barreto had taken pity on the man, partly on account of his age (he was already a very old man), partly because he had a daughter dependent on him, and, knowing that he was no worse than many highly-placed officials whose dishonesty

had not been exposed, had remitted the sentence and appointed him to be Captain of Mozambique.

Brandao had not personally met Dom Vicente before Father Monclaros brought him to his house, and therefore before passing on to other topics he entreated the cavalleiro to relate the sad story of his misfortunes. Dom Vicente told his tale with a skill that frequent repetition had made perfect; how he had met the lovely and accomplished Dona Beatriz for the first time on board the *Sao Raphael*, how they had fallen madly in love with each other at first sight, how the good Father Sebastian, taking pity on lovers' sighs, had consented to marry them during the voyage, how when the ship was wrecked he had swum ashore supporting the fainting body of his bride; how, during the terrible march overland he had worn himself out to find food for her, and defended her at the risk of his life from the attacks of wild beasts, and how, finally, in spite of all he could do for her, she had succumbed to the hardships of the march and expired in his arms. "Ah! how dearly I loved her!" cried Dom Vicente, as an appropriate conclusion to his story, burying his face in his hands to hide his lack of emotion from his companions.

They comforted him with sympathetic murmurs, and pressed him to drink a glass of some wine that Brandao had filched from an eastward-bound cargo. Then Monclaros began to outline the relative merits of the Sofala and the Quelimane routes, for the purposes of the expedition against

Monomatapa. He pointed out that the fact that though Portuguese in small parties had reached the court of that monarch from Sofala, this was no proof that an army could follow in their footsteps. A few men travelling together could find all the water they needed in pools, springs, and native wells, whereas an army travelling with many baggage animals was forced to keep within reasonable distance of perennial streams. By the Sofala route Barreto's army might be compelled to turn back within the first week's march for lack of water. The Zambesi River, on the other hand, if the Quelimane route were adopted, not only simplified the problem of transport, but ensured that the army would have an ample supply of water for at least three-quarters of the distance from the coast.

"That is how I regard the matter as a humble student of military difficulties," said the Jesuit. "I will now show how it affects you gentlemen as captains respectively of Sena and Mozambique. Whichever route is adopted will eventually become the commercial highway between Monomatapa's country and the sea. If that highway be by way of Sofala, Sena and Mozambique will remain comparatively unimportant fortresses. If that highway is by way of the Zambesi River, all exports will pass Sena, and be transshipped into homeward-bound vessels at Mozambique. In other words, you two gentlemen would have the handling of Monomatapa's gold, and perhaps" — the priest treated his audience to a very unclerical wink — "some of it

might stick to your fingers. Have I said enough, Senhor Brandao? Dom Vicente is already convinced that the Quelimane route would be best. Can I count on your support in advocating it to the council?"

"Most assuredly," answered the Captain of Mozambique.

"Then I will put another matter before you," continued Monclaros, drawing his chair nearer to the table and lowering his voice. "Listen! I have no faith in the success of this expedition. It will cost far more in money and lives than it is worth. We Portuguese are masters of the sea, but we have little success on land. Where in the whole of Africa and Asia have we been able to advance beyond the coast? Remember the fate of the expedition into Abyssinia, of which but five men returned alive. Even on the coast we can hold our own only with the help of our fleet. We are constantly besieged at Chaul, at Calicut—even at Goa itself. How can we hope, not only to send a successful army many weeks' journey into an unknown land, but to maintain it when it is there? We should need one army of occupation, and another to preserve communication between that army and the sea. Those two armies would cost more than even Monomatapa's mines could pay."

Dom Vicente and Senhor Brandao looked glum.

"Then how do you propose to get Monomatapa's gold?" asked the latter.

“By honest trade,” replied Monclaros. “As a man of God, I hate war. As a man of sense, I know it to be foolish. The Kaffirs have no idea of the value of gold. If we teach them to desire cloth and wine, and such things as we can sell them, we shall get the gold with less trouble and with less cost than by sending an army to take it.”

“Then do you propose that the expedition should be abandoned?” inquired Dom Vicente.

“I would if I thought my voice would be heard. Matters have gone so far, however, that nothing I could say would prevent them going further. But this I desire for the sake of my gallant but thick-headed countrymen. Since the expedition is doomed to failure, the nearer the coast it fails the better. If it fails far inland, as the Abyssinian expedition failed, not only will the lives of many gallant men be sacrificed, but our arms and cannon will fall into the hands of the savages, to be used against us.” Monclaros leant over towards Brandao, and almost whispered in his ear, “Let it be your business to see that the expedition fails before it has reached a point from which it cannot retreat.”

“How?” gasped Brandao.

“By withholding supplies,” answered the priest. “You are to be charged with the duty of forwarding such supplies as reach Mozambique after Barreto has started. Keep them back, and the expedition cannot advance beyond recall.”

“Senhor Barreto will ruin me!”

“He cannot if you get the king’s ear first. Denounce him for peculation. The accounts will be in your hands while the expedition is inland, and you can easily make it appear—— No; the king will not believe that. He knows that Senhor Barreto has spent his whole private fortune in arms for the troops. I have it! Say that he designs to use the armament to make himself king of Monomaptapa’s country. His having bought arms with his own money will support the tale.”

Brandao hesitated. He was an accomplished scoundrel, but never in all the eighty years of his evil life had he sunk to such depths of villainy as the priest proposed.

“I owe my life to Senhor Barreto,” he muttered.

“What do you owe to your own flesh and blood?” urged Monclaros. “You have it in your power to leave your daughter such a dowry as might tempt a prince of the royal house to seek her in marriage—or you may leave her to poverty. Enough! Take pen and parchment and write as I shall dictate.”

Brandao seated himself at the table, and wrote with trembling hands to the priest’s dictation, Dom Vicente helping with occasional suggestions. If he had cherished vague ideas of saving himself and what was left of his honour by destroying the letter privately after the priest had gone, his plan was frustrated, for as soon as the letter was signed

Father Monclaros took it in his own hands, scattered sand over it, folded it, and put it in his wallet.

“I will see that it reaches the king’s hands,” he said.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH THE NOUR JEHAN CHANGES HANDS

THE value of the captaincy of Sena was rather potential than actual at the time when Dom Vicente was intriguing to obtain it. The town consisted of forty stone houses and a large number of huts. The former belonged to wealthy half-bred Arab merchants, descendants of men who had settled there a hundred years or more before Vasco da Gama doubled the Cape of Storms. These men acknowledged allegiance to a sheikh, who in turn paid homage and occasional tribute to the distant potentate Monomatapa; ten wattle and daub shanties sheltered Portuguese merchants who obeyed no laws except those dictated by their own somewhat callous consciences and the fear of their powerful neighbors. And some thousand native huts were inhabited by slaves of the Arabs and some other Kaffirs who, having left their own tribes in consequence of various offences against tribal law, had elected to live under the protection of men who were too powerful for their chiefs to harry. Some hundred other Arabs made their headquarters in the village, though these were often absent on

trading expeditions in the interior. The captaincy of Sena might nevertheless have become exceedingly profitable in experienced hands. A large amount of gold was in circulation in the settlement, and any Portuguese who knew his business, and had a fort to protect him and a hundred soldiers to enforce his authority could, by levying octroi and other duties, and house and land taxes, by exacting fines, and by selling justice, in a comparatively short time have laid the basis of a comfortable fortune.

Mopango, the old sheikh, having amassed wealth by making a score or so of long, difficult and dangerous trading expeditions into the interior, had retired from active business, and used his money to finance at exorbitant interest younger and less wealthy traders. One of these, a man named Manhuesa, whose claim to be regarded as an Arab was based on descent from a pure-bred great-grandfather and a vague belief in the Prophet, had set out from Sena some months before Barreto's expedition, had travelled northwards to Lake Nyassa, then in a south-westerly direction to what is now known as Mashonaland. From there, having exchanged his weighty merchandise for gold, and sold the slaves he no longer needed, he had continued in a southeasterly direction in search of a profitable market for his next trip. Chance had led him towards the coast, and when he was on the point of turning back towards Sena a rumour reached him that a neighbouring chief was the proud possessor of some Portuguese slaves. Partly out of curiosity and

partly with the hope of finding that they were worth ransoming, he had decided to verify the rumour, with the result that he walked into Inyaka's village five months after the day on which Temple and his companions had reached it.

It was true that those survivors of the wreck of the *Sao Raphael* whom Dom Vicente and his party had deserted, had sunk from the position of honoured guests to that of more or less valueless slaves. Yet Inyaka had treated them well according to his lights. When they had seen the Portuguese vessel sail away without them he had consoled them by declaring that it would return next year, and had advised them to wait at his village until its return. This advice they had reluctantly decided to accept. Without a compass or without a guide their chances of reaching Sofala would have been small. Their store of metal had been lavishly squandered before they reached Inyaka's village, and none cared again to return to a diet of carrion and lizards such as would have been theirs had they attempted to travel without the means of buying food.

Inyaka found it profitable to deal with Portuguese. They gave him fine cloth and beautiful beads in exchange for such worthless articles as gold dust and ivory. When they entertained him they gave him wine that had a far more exhilarating effect than the beer which his own wives made. Naturally, therefore, he looked forward with delight to the prospect of having Portuguese in the village for a whole year.

For a week he feasted the wanderers royally. Then he began to have doubts as to whether they really were Portuguese. They had given him no presents. They had shown no desire to trade. They had no cloth nor any of the beautiful trinkets which his people liked to buy. To make sure how he stood, Inyaka one morning bluntly suggested that it was time that they paid for the food which they received. Temple endeavoured to explain the position, and promised ample recompense as soon as the Portuguese ship returned. With this Inyaka expressed himself satisfied, but from that day the food he gave to his guests deteriorated both in quality and quantity, until a fortnight or so later the supply ceased altogether.

To do Inyaka justice it must be admitted that he and his people had little enough food for themselves. In the part of Africa which he inhabited the rainy season which produces quickly ripening fruit is known as the season of new food. This is followed in definite succession by the season of harvest, the season of beer drinking (when most of the ripe grain instead of being stored is made into the African variety of beer, the most extravagant use to which it can be put), and then appropriately enough by the season of hunger, which continues until after the spring grass burning, when it is easy to hunt game. Temple and his companions had reached Inyaka's village at the time when the season of hunger follows hard on the beer-drinking season, and they suffered in consequence. Occasionally

hunting parties from the village killed hippopotami or elephants (smaller game could not be hunted while the grass was long), and on such occasions the Portuguese shared in the general plenty. At other times they were left to shift for themselves.

At a time when the natural inhabitants of a country have insufficient food strangers who have neither money nor its equivalent fare hard. The Portuguese, after contesting with the local dogs the right to derive precarious sustenance from the village rubbish heaps, adopted the last course that was open to them and sold themselves in desperation as slaves, glad to carry wood and water in exchange for such food as their barbaric masters could spare them.

At this crisis, Temple's early training as a goldsmith stood him in good stead. While still an honoured guest he had amused himself by manufacturing wire out of crude copper and plaiting it in intricate patterns round the haft of one of Inyaka's spears. This had so delighted the chief that when necessity drove Temple to sell himself he found Inyaka not only prepared to buy him, but prepared to grant him some important concessions. Among the conditions for which Temple stipulated before selling himself were that Dona Beatriz was to be his assistant, that each was to have a hut, and that neither was to be required to do any menial work. After a consultation with the other Portuguese, Temple wisely represented Dona Beatriz as his son, a deception easy enough

to carry through, for Inyaka had never seen a white woman, Dona Beatriz was clothed in the same kind of rags as were her male companions, and long hair was sometimes to be found on the heads of male members of Inyaka's tribe, but never on those of the women.

Now Sadak, the Arab, having an intimate knowledge of the country, could have saved himself from slavery by leaving his Portuguese companions and making northwards. He had, however, suffered so much in his efforts to obtain the priceless jewel which he believed Temple to have about his person that he was loath to leave them while there was still hope of securing it. He had been a stowaway in the ship that carried Temple a prisoner from Ormuz to Goa. He had managed to transship into the *Sao Raphael* by herding unobtrusively among the slaves. He had suffered so many indignities and hardships that he was prepared to suffer a few more rather than separate from the man to be with whom he had undergone so much.

He was beginning however to despair of success, and when the Arab trader Manhuesa came to the village he resolved to take that worthy into partnership, for the Nour Jehan, if one-tenth as valuable as it was reputed to be, could raise not two, but a hundred such men as they above the dreams of avarice.

Now the Arab trader celebrated his arrival at the village by giving a feast to which the Portuguese were invited, and Temple, having eaten his salt

before Sadak had an opportunity of telling his secret, should have been by Arab custom immune from attack, but the trader was not Quixotic enough to let punctilious considerations interfere with business. The secret was revealed and a partnership arranged on the day that followed the feast, and that night, an hour before dawn, the two Arabs made their way silently to Temple's quarters. These, for Temple had declared that the mysteries of his craft required secrecy, consisted of two huts, once the property of a headman who had been disgraced, standing by themselves within a tall reed fence that shut them off from the rest of the village. Fortunately for the Englishman, chivalry had prompted him to make his bed every night, not in the hut which he was supposed to occupy, but under the eaves of that occupied by Dona Beatriz, to shield her from any possible danger. The two conspirators, therefore, groped about the floor in the darkness until they bumped their heads together, without finding the man they sought.

"He is in the other hut," whispered Sadak, "follow me closely ;" and those were the last words he ever uttered, for as he stooped under the low door a sword swung and he fell lifeless on the ground. Manhuesa heard the scuffle without knowing clearly what had happened, and preferring to fight in the open made a dart for the entrance, but before he could straighten himself on the far side of the low door a crashing blow descended on his head. The world danced round him in a fiery

shower of stars. Then he seemed to sink slowly into a silent sea of impenetrable darkness.

He recovered consciousness to find his arms and feet securely bound, and Temple pouring water on his head. Sadak's lifeless body had been hauled into the hut and lay, a gruesome heap, on the far side of the floor.

"I spared that dog's life because he was useful to me," said the Englishman, in the bastard Arabic of the Levant, "although he sought my life a dozen times. He is of no further use, for now I know the native tongue as well as he himself, so I have killed him. I wish to see whether you may be useful to me before I kill you also. Whence come you?"

"From Sena," muttered Manhuesa. Desiring time to think, he did not wish to exasperate Temple by sullenness.

"Are there Portuguese there?"

"There are twenty there, and it is said more are coming."

"Good. Now I and my companions wish to go there, but we have no guide, nor until we get to Sena can we get the wherewithal to buy food on the road. Moreover, we have sold ourselves to men in this village. Redeem us. Take us with your caravan to Sena, and you shall be paid a thousand cruzados in Portuguese money when we get there."

"Listen, senhor," replied the Arab, who had now had time to collect his thoughts. "It is true that I am now in your power, but on the beard of

the Prophet I swear that if I die before sunrise you will die before noon. We Arabs travel the country defenceless, for armed expeditions cost more than the profit that can be derived from them. But we know each other's movements, and if one dies we unite to avenge his death. Inyaka knows that if I were killed in his village, within three months my sheikh, Mopango, would come with his men and eat up the village, killing all the men and carrying the women and children into slavery. The dawn is near. In a few moments it will be light. There is no time for you to hide my dead body. Kill me if you like, but if you do Inyaka will send your head and the heads of all your companions to Mopango to pay the price of mine."

"We will then discuss the affair as between friendly merchants, but I will not unbind you yet," replied Temple. "Do you agree to my terms?"

By this time the Arab had decided to accept the situation without futile struggles. Although bound so tightly that he could not move, his face and tone were as impassive as if, instead of being huddled on his back in a very uncomfortable and very undignified heap, he were seated at ease, discussing business matters with a friend.

"I have not enough merchandise to ransom your companions," he replied; "but I will ransom you and take you with my caravan in consideration of your having spared my life."

"And cut my throat as soon as we are out of earshot. Ransom all or none."

"The price is too high," answered Manhoesa. "Listen and I will explain. I left Sena with one thousand bunches of Indian beads that I bought from the Portuguese for one hundred cruzados. I travelled northwards fifteen days' journey to a land where there is a great lake. There the people are skilled in growing and weaving cotton. I exchanged my beads for two thousand man-lengths of cloth, and with this I travelled for fifty days in the direction in which the sun sets in summer-time. All this is true. I came to the land over which rules Monomatapa. For each man-length of cloth I there received a quill full of gold, worth in Sena two cruzados. I should therefore now have four thousand cruzados' worth of gold but that I have had to reserve a stock of cloth as presents for the chiefs whom I visit, and to buy food on the way for myself and my slaves. I have already asked Inyaka at what price he will allow you to be redeemed. He demands twenty man-lengths of cloth or ten bunches of beads for each of your companions, and double that quantity for yourself. I could therefore ransom you at a cost of one cruzado for each of your companions and two for yourself, but I have so little cloth left that it would barely suffice to buy food for my caravan and yourselves between here and Sena. Therefore, if I ransom you, I must pay in gold. We Arabs and the Portuguese have agreed to keep Inyaka in ignorance of the value of gold. He would demand for your ransom as many quills of gold as he has demanded

man-lengths of cloth. For you and your six companions I should have to pay one hundred and sixty quills of gold. There would also be blood-money to pay for the Arab you have killed, though, as he is not subject to Mopango, that would not be so high as if he were a Sena Arab. I expect to reach Sena with one thousand five hundred quills of gold. Mopango, who lent me the money and slaves with which to go on this expedition, is entitled to two-thirds of my profit. I shall therefore have only five hundred quills for myself, and I cannot, out of my small profit, pay one hundred and sixty for you and your companions."

"I have promised to pay a thousand cruzados."

"I have learned in Sena that a Christian's word is not the word of an Arab."

Temple could not argue the point. Having no money of his own, he knew that Manhuesa's chances of getting the thousand cruzados would be problematical.

"What do you ask, then?" he replied.

"Why did I come to this hut? Give me the Nour Jehan, and I swear to carry you and your companions to Sena."

"If I had the Nour Jehan it would be too big a price to pay for a few men's liberty. Besides, in a few months a Portuguese ship will be here. Name a fair price, and I will do everything in my power to have you paid."

"There is another matter," continued Manhuesa. "Inyaka thinks to ally himself with the

Portuguese by marrying a Portuguese wife. He sent to the captain of Sofala, offering a hundred tusks of ivory for a Portuguese woman. Whether the offer would have been accepted I know not; but there were no women to spare. Such few Portuguese women as come to Africa are married almost before they set foot on shore. If I told Inyaka that one of his Portuguese slaves is a woman—you see that Sadak told me all there is to know about you all—she would be grinding corn over there before the sun went down. Would that please you?”

The Arab pointed towards the enclosure reserved for Inyaka's household, in which those of his dozen wives who were of too high rank to work in the field gossiped and quarrelled from dawn to dusk.

“What of that?” answered the Englishman. “The woman is nothing to me.”

At the moment that he uttered the words Temple knew that he lied. He knew that the woman, whose sex and delicacy had hitherto constituted her sole claim to his care, was all the world and more to him. The new-born knowledge flushed his cheek and set his heart thumping against his ribs. The Arab read his face in the growing light, smiled, and said nothing.

Temple turned and sat staring through the hut door, past the gate of the reed enclosure. The village was awaking and setting about the work of the day. The huts stood black against the gold of the eastern sky. In five minutes or less the sun would be up. Long lines of women, carrying huge



“He knew that the woman . . . was all the world . . .
to him.”

waterpots on their heads, were gossiping shrilly as they filed down the narrow path that led to the river. Senhor Furtado and the other Portuguese came out of a ruined hut that had been assigned to them, munching lumps of stiff millet porridge that they had saved from their evening meal, and hurried off to their master's fields. Father Sebastian, who had been reading his office in a quiet corner, pocketed his breviary, picked up a hoe and followed them. Boys opened the goat pens and drove their charges out to graze. Men emerged one by one from their huts, yawned, stretched, betook themselves to the part of the village where the sun would first strike, and prepared in leisurely fashion to occupy themselves with mending nets or such light work as suits the dignity of an African husband. The familiar scene passed before Temple's eyes unheeded. His heart was filled with a new, somewhat bitter, but wholly beautiful emotion. The pain, the hardship, the misery of the past year seemed merely a commonplace setting to the unmarked birth and growth of his love — that love that had not declared itself to him till it was master of his whole being.

Some men go to seek love. To others it comes uncalled. Since the moment when first Temple had set eyes on Dona Beatriz his conscious thoughts had been fixed on but one matter — how to regain his liberty, win his way back to England and enjoy the reward for which he had suffered so much. His first act of charity towards the girl had cost him nothing. His care for her on the terrible march

overland had been prompted by the natural chivalry of an English gentleman, but it is possible that he would not have shown her this care if it had not been that, if anything, it might tend to help rather than to hinder his plans. Caring for her had become a habit, and the habit had grown insensibly into love.

In the love of all men there are elements that make it akin to the love felt by the lower animals. One of these, the fierce desire of the male to protect its mate, exists but is seldom felt in the love of those whose lives are set in easy places ; but the habit of caring for Dona Beatriz, and pity for the hardship she suffered, had developed this instinct to the full. Indeed, it was the feeling of hot rage at the thought of the misery Dona Beatriz would suffer were she forced into the arms of the Inyaka that had first revealed his love to him. Of the mating instinct, that other element which all animals feel, the Englishman was unconscious. The lower animals seldom mate in captivity, and men do not mate, or think of mating, under circumstances in which a hand-to-hand fight for bare existence occupies every thought and energy.

Ever since his capture at Ormuz, Temple's plans for the regaining of his liberty had mingled with dreams of the use to which he should put it. He had pictured himself appearing at Queen Elizabeth's court with the Nour Jehan in his hand, showing the jewel to the gallant gentlemen adventurers who thronged that court, and persuading

them and their Royal mistress — the persuasion would not be difficult with such a bait to dangle — to fit out an expedition, organized by merchant princes, such men as Sir Edward Osborne and Sir Francis Walsingham, manned by Devon sea-dogs and led by such men as Grenville, Drake, and Hawkins, with which to harry the Portuguese in India till the phantom sceptre of Eastern dominion dropped from their grasp. The dream came back to Temple as he stared out of the hut door, and he smiled as he thought of the littleness of the dream compared with the great reality that had come into his life. Of what worth was the Nour Jehan or the wealth and power it might bring him compared with the frail girl who had entangled herself in his heart-strings?

With the first ray of sun, Dona Beatriz emerged from the neighbouring hut and began to arrange Temple's tools for the day's work. The Englishman watched her as she passed to and fro. Her face, sallow and marked with the effects of pain, had lost its beauty. An angry sore, the result of poor and insufficient food, disfigured her forehead. Suddenly she saw Temple and smiled, and at once the poor worn face became in his eyes the most beautiful thing in the world.

"Will you go for water to-day, Dona Beatriz?" he said. "I do not wish to leave the hut just yet."

He watched her go, and then entered the hut.

"Have you decided to pay my price?" asked the Arab, with a covetous grin.

Temple drew a knife and hacked at the root of his beard, just under his chin. After a few tugs he pulled away a lump of black beeswax. He cut open the lump and revealed the jewel for which he had risked his life and lost his liberty. It shone in the dim light of the hut like a ball of dancing fire.

"How do I know that you will do your share?" he asked.

"Look for a chain round my neck," answered Manhuesa. Do you see a little metal case? It contains dust from the Holy Stone at Mecca. Hold it before my eyes, and I will swear on that."

The oath was sworn. Temple cut the ropes which bound Manhuesa's hands and feet. The Arab stretched his cramped limbs, pocketed the Nour Jehan, and rose.

"Tell your companions to be ready to march to-morrow," he said as he left the hut.

CHAPTER XV

JOHN TEMPLE BECOMES A CAPTAIN IN THE PORTUGUESE ARMY

THE knowledge that Senhor Brandao had of the Zambesi River and that which Dom Vicente pretended to have of the country behind Sofala, together with Father Monclaros's practical representation of the advantage of a navigable river in the transport of artillery, so weighed with Barreto's council that it was finally decided that the expedition against Monomatapa should proceed by way of Quelimane and the Zambesi rather than by Sofala.

The column consisted of Barreto, five colonels, a few priests, three hundred Portuguese fidalgoes and cavalleiros, seven hundred arquebusiers, eighty Hindoo slaves, a thousand Kaffir camp followers, thirty horses, and a few camels and donkeys. It sailed for Quelimane on November 20, 1571, and three days later transshipped at that port into light canoes and flat-bottomed barges. The river being at its lowest at that season of the year, the Quelimane mouth was impracticable, so, skirting the coast of the delta for three days more, the expedition reached and entered a branch of the river

called Luabo, known to the Portuguese of those days, but subsequently forgotten for three hundred years till rediscovered by the immortal Livingstone. Thirteen days later Sena was reached, and Barreto, to guard his communications with the coast, decided before advancing farther to build a fort at that place, and leave in it, to guard his rear, a hundred men under Dom Vicente.

Barreto was too good a soldier to attempt to win by force what might be gained by diplomacy. He determined, therefore, that while the necessary halt was made he would send a messenger to Monomatapa, inviting him to surrender without further trouble. After rejecting the proffered services of a dozen of his most hot-headed and inexperienced officers as envoys, he selected a Portuguese resident of Sena, Miguel Bernandez, who had been at the potentate's court before. This man was instructed to tell Monomatapa that no harm would come to him if he would consent to return to Christianity, to expel the Arabs from his kingdom, to receive and support as many priests as were sent to him, and to cede all his gold-mines to the king of Portugal; but that if he failed to comply with these demands, Francisco Barreto would follow hard on the heels of his envoy, dethrone him, and send him in chains to Portugal.

While the column was waiting to receive an answer to this demand, and to build Dom Vicente's fort, Monclaros began to work for the execution of a plan that formed a part of his complex scheme.

He considered it necessary that the Arabs at Sena, both because they were followers of the False Prophet and because they were serious commercial rivals of the Portuguese merchants, should be not merely subjugated, but utterly destroyed.

Unfortunately for his hopes of winning Barreto to his point of view, Monclaros had to deal with the general single-handed, for most of the members of the council had elected to remain in Mozambique and furnish advice from their comparatively comfortable quarters there. The Arabs, moreover, instead of resenting the arrival of the expedition, treated its members with every courtesy. They warned the Portuguese against the dangers of the climate, and advised them to rest during the heat of the day. They warned them that the water of the river was dangerous, and advised them to dig wells. They warned them that certain pastures and certain hours were dangerous to live stock, and recommended Barreto to order that his horses, camels, and donkeys should not be allowed to graze when dew was on the grass, and at other times only on the sandy dunes that fringed the margin of the river.

All this advice Barreto acted on thankfully, but Monclaros contrived to put a sinister interpretation on every suggestion. He hinted that the Arabs condemned the climate in hopes of persuading Barreto to abandon the expedition, that they recommended rest during the heat of the day, in order to protract the work of fort-building, that they advised the digging of wells because, whereas it was

impossible to poison the main stream of the river, to poison wells was a simple matter, and that they wished the expedition's live stock to be restricted to certain areas, in order the more easily to poison the pasture on which they grazed.

The Arabs had every reason to condemn the climate of Sena, for the whole valley of the Lower Zambesi is as unhealthy both for men and for unacclimatised domestic animals as any part of Africa. It is indeed worse for the latter than for the former. A strong and temperate man may live at Sena for several months before he suffers from his first attack of fever, but a horse, even if he escape the horse-sickness which prevails almost throughout every part of Africa, will in a few weeks begin to pine and to suffer from horrible ulcers caused by the bites of poisonous flies. Before the expedition had been at Sena a week several men had sickened, and several of the beasts were already dead.

It happened one day towards the end of December that a number of the Portuguese officers had received and accepted an invitation to sup that night with the whole of the Arab community. Monclaros, seeing an opportunity to press his point, hurried to Barreto as soon as he heard of the forthcoming banquet. He found the general standing on one of the unfinished ramparts of the fort, watching the progress of the work.

"What news?" asked the general moodily. He was beginning to tire of the priest's interference.

"Another horse died an hour ago. That is the

tenth. Now only twenty are left. If more die your Excellency will have to wait here until more horses can be brought from India."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," replied Barreto sharply. "My officers can walk as well as the arquebusiers."

"The responsibility rests with you, of course," answered the priest with a shrug of his shoulders. "Still I venture to suggest that these frequent deaths should be prevented."

"How?"

"You have heard that the Moors have invited us to a banquet. It is obvious of course, that, having failed to frighten us away by abusing the climate and poisoning our horses, they now intend boldly to poison us. I propose that a hundred of us should nevertheless attend the banquet, secretly armed, and that at a given signal every cavalleiro should rise and slay the Moor nearest to him. Thus would we put an end once and for all to these treacherous foes."

"As God shall help me," exclaimed Barreto furiously, "I believe that a priest knows as little of honour as I know of—— What's that?"

A furlong lower down the river, where the Arabs' houses were, a cloud of dust was rising, and the voices of women were lu-lu-looing in greeting to returning travellers. The noise and the dust-cloud did not stop, however, at the Arab settlement, but came right on towards the Portuguese camp. The men who were building the fort stopped their work to stare.

"Look at these men!" cried an arquebusier. "May I burst if there are not Portuguese among them. See, one is a priest, you can see his cassock, and a boy too——" He threw down a trowel that he had been wielding with awkward, unaccustomed hand, and ran towards the approaching strangers. Others followed, and soon those who approached were the centre of a noisy, gesticulating throng. The strangers paused for a moment, then came straight on towards where Barreto stood, who, letting dignity give way to curiosity, hurried to meet them.

"Greetings, senhors," he said. "In Heaven's name, who and what are you?"

"I am John Temple," said the leading man, "an Englishman taken prisoner by your countrymen in Ormuz and sent in the *Sao Raphael* by the Viceroy at Goa to the conquest of Monomatapa. Let me present to your Excellency Dona Beatriz Correa da Mattos, Father Sebastian of the Rosary, Senhor Furtado, Senhor Dias, and Senhor de Paz. We and this gunner, Jorge, are the only survivors of the wreck of the *Sao Raphael*."

"Survivors of the *Sao Raphael*!" exclaimed Barreto. "There is some riddle here. Carry my compliments to Dom Vicente d'Alvarez da Saldanha, one of you gentlemen, and bid him be so good as to come here."

"Let me tell the tale, your Excellency," cried Furtado. "We all owe our lives to this Englishman, and it may be he will be too modest to tell it in full."

Furtado gave a rapid sketch of the overland march from Natal, and then Dom Vicente was called upon to reconcile his tale with that of the newcomers. He lied glibly, and, considering how short a time he had to think, with extraordinary plausibility.

Soon the general interrupted him. "Enough for the present," he said, "I shall appoint a commission to inquire into your conduct. Meanwhile, give me your sword. Senhor Temple, I see you have a sword that I seem to recognize. You shall tell me later how you came by it. Senhor Furtado, take Dom Vicente's sword and with it temporary command of the garrison which I shall leave in Sena when we march. Senhor Temple, you will accompany the expedition as a member of my council, with the rank and pay of captain. You must sit at my side at the banquet to-night, and tell me more of your story. Till then *A Deus*."

"Does it occur to your Excellency," interrupted the Jesuit, "that his Majesty, whom may God guard, may not be pleased to learn that an English convict is in receipt of his pay?"

Having received special instructions from the king in person that he was to do nothing without consulting Monclaros, Barreto was compelled to treat the priest with more courtesy than he deserved. There were occasions, however, when he found it necessary to remind the Jesuit who it was that was in command of the expedition.

"When I return to Portugal," he replied with

dignity, "I shall present my lord, the king, with an account of the money I have spent on his behalf. If he considers that I have exceeded my instructions, I will offer my own property to make good the deficit, and if that does not suffice, I shall say to him that another time he must not put a sword into the hands of a fool."

Monclaros, realizing that the moment was inopportune, did not press his plan for a treacherous massacre of the Mohammedans, and at the banquet that night it might have been noticed that, despite his avowed suspicion of the food, he ate as heartily as the rest.

The feast was held in the spacious courtyard of the sheikh's house. The company sat in a wide half circle on mats spread on the ground, and dipped their hands into bowls of scented rice and dishes of greasy but highly savoury goats' flesh. When the substantial viands had been disposed of, the slaves handed round "many sweetmeats, and among other things, some excellent marmalade," which latter seems particularly to have pleased the Portuguese, for Diogo de Couto, the historian of Barreto's expedition, especially refers to it in connection with subsequent events. At this stage of the banquet the Portuguese loosened their belts and loudly called for the Englishman's story.

In those spacious days of violence and romance no taint of dishonour attached to piracy and robbery so long as it was committed on members of another nation. Temple, therefore, could tell his tale

quite frankly without losing credit in the estimation of his audience. The Portuguese murmured commiseration when he described his arrest on suspicion of being the possessor of the Nour Jehan, cheered when he told of his attempt to crack the skull of the Archbishop in the palace of the Viceroy of Goa, laughed heartily when he related the failure of the conspiracy to seize the *Sao Raphael* and cheered loud and long when Senhor Furtado, interrupting the story, told how Temple had usurped command of the survivors after the death of Dom Balthazar. At length, as the candles that lit the courtyard began to flicker in their sockets, Temple reached that part of his story in which he had to explain how he induced Manhuesa to redeem him and his companions from Inyaka and bring them to Sena.

"Then you had the jewel all the time," shouted Barreto. "Do you hear, gentlemen, he outwitted Dom Luiz and the Archbishop and the rest of them, for he had the jewel after all. I wish I could be in Goa to see the Viceroy's face when the tale reaches his ears."

Temple's audience fairly rocked with laughter, and a dozen eager voices demanded how he had concealed the jewel.

"Why, I had stuck it into my beard with beeswax," he explained. "It is an Indian trick that I learned in the Levant trade."

"But surely scores of Indians, knowing the trick, must have guessed where it was hid," de-

manded one of the fidalgoes. "How was it that none of them gave a hint to your captors where to look?"

"Why, of course every man in the Ormuz bazaar knew where to look for it," Temple explained, "but while it remained in my possession there was a chance for any Indian of spirit to murder me and steal it, whereas had a Portuguese once got his hands on it the jewel would have been lost to India for ever."

The jest was greeted with renewed shouts of laughter, during which Monclaros stood up in his place, and shouted —

"Senhor Barreto, I claim that jewel in the name of the head of my Order. The Great Mogul, from whose servants it was stolen, had meant it as a present for his Most Faithful Majesty the King of Portugal, and King Sebastian has piously dedicated all such presents to further the holy labours of the Society of Jesus. I claim the jewel on behalf of my Order."

The Jesuit's claim passed unheeded at the moment, for Barreto either did not hear or did not heed it, and the rest of the Portuguese were crowding round the Englishman, courteously welcoming him as a fellow-officer, and asking a score of questions about his terrible overland march. There was another man present who took an interest in the ownership of the Nour Jehan. Mopango, the Sheikh, who understood enough Portuguese to follow the main outlines of Temple's story, took advantage of the

general laughter to slip away from his guests. Beckoning to three of his compatriots he led them aside and whispered —

“Go swiftly, find Manhoesa, and bring him secretly to me.”

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH THE NOUR JEHAN CHANGES HANDS FOR
THE LAST TIME

ON the day that followed the banquet the physicians that accompanied the expedition were kept busy attending many whose appreciation of the meal set before them had not been controlled by that prudence which is advisable in those who eat rich food in an unhealthy climate. Monclaros, as a good priest should, visited each patient after the physician had left him, chatted with him, listened sympathetically to a description of his sufferings, endeavoured to cheer him, and before leaving him raised a question as to whether the marmalade the patient had eaten on the previous evening could possibly have been poisoned. Most of the sufferers recovered their normal health within two days, but the seed of suspicion sown by the Jesuit had taken root in their minds, and henceforth there was a steadily growing number of men who believed that every misfortune that befell the members of the column could be attributed to the Arabs.

It was now the height of summer, and the common scourge of the deadly climate began to

be felt. There is something horribly mysterious in the workings of malarial fever. Its cause seems so difficult to discover. Its effects work with a sinister precision. The first Portuguese to write an account of what we now know to be malarial fever, believing that the African continent was the special haunt of Satan, not unnaturally attributed the disease to evil spirits; but the men who served under Barreto being unable to trace it to natural causes, seeing that it always attacked men at the same time of the day, and having had their suspicions roused against the Arabs, regarded it as the effect either of poison or of witchcraft contrived by their neighbours. Every afternoon two hours before sunset one or more men, in spite of the fierce heat, complained of cold, and soon afterwards were seized with fierce paroxysms of vomiting that continued at intervals throughout the night. Of those thus afflicted a few died on the following day, and those that survived were so weakened that for two days they could scarcely stand. It was noticed that those who recovered, recovered completely within five days, and the circumstance strengthened the latent suspicions of observers.

Though sickness was rife among the men, it was proportionately far worse among the animals. Not a day passed in which a horse did not die, and the donkeys and camels, though they resisted disease longer, were obviously in bad case. One night Barreto was told that his favourite horse, a magnificent black stallion, was dying. Hurrying

to the place where it was tethered he saw that the poor beast was suffering acutely. It was trembling all over. Its head hung low. Rheum streamed from its eyes. Occasionally it would rouse itself despairingly to fight the sickness, rearing, plunging and squealing piteously. As Barreto watched it after a fearful struggle it fell, struggled to its feet again, fell once more, dropped its handsome head and died. Any modern Afrikander child would have recognized the disease that annually destroys African horses by the hundred, but to the Portuguese it was as horribly mysterious as the disease that week by week thinned their own ranks.

“Will your Excellency now refuse to believe that that horse has been poisoned?” asked Monclaros, triumphantly. “If you still doubt I can convince you.” He turned to two soldiers who stood by. “Go to my tent and bring his Excellency’s groom, whom you will find there.”

The soldiers went on their errand and returned, dragging between them a thin trembling Hindoo, who on reaching the group flung himself on the ground, sobbed hysterically, and grovelled at Monclaros’ feet.

“Do not torture me again, Holy Father,” he cried in broken Portuguese. “Have I not said all you wished me to say?”

“Tell his Excellency what you did to the pasture and who paid you to do it.”

The poor wretch wriggled round and squirmed at Barreto’s feet.

"It is true. I poisoned the pasture every morning before the horses went to graze," he whimpered.

"Mopango, the sheikh, paid me to do it."

"When did he bribe you?" demanded Barreto.

The Hindoo groom was not prepared for this question, and knew not how Monclaros would wish him to answer it. He looked at the priest for a hint, but receiving none, buried his face on the ground again and repeated his story afresh.

"The man's tale is worth nothing," declared Barreto. "If I put you to the thumbscrew, Dom Priest, in five minutes I would make you swear that the sun is black," and turning, he strode angrily back to his quarters.

Monclaros, furiously angry, went off to his own quarters and comforted himself by writing an account of the event in the journal which he intended, if other devices failed, to send to King Sebastian, in order that it should accomplish the ruin of Francisco Barreto.

"The Moors wished to kill the horses with poison," he wrote. "They sent in the morning and put poison on the pasture and made the governor believe that when any died it was from the effect of a certain noxious herb and made the inhabitants believe this, and there are men in Sofala who believe the same error. The governor was vexed and cast black looks upon me when I spoke to him about it. He trusted the Moors because of the feigned honours they rendered him at his coming to Sena. The expedition had thirty horses. The Moors bribed a

groom to give them poison in the mornings. This was not discovered till they had killed fifteen of the best, and I always asserted that it was caused by the poison of the Moors, but it was no use, until the groom being tortured confessed that ——”

A voice from outside the tent interrupted the priest.

“Are you there, Father? There is an Arab here asking justice against Mopango. Knowing the governor’s love for the sheikh we have brought him to you, thinking that you might like to question him.”

Monclaros hastily put away his journal and looked out of the tent.

“Ah, it is you, Dom Antonio. I am glad to see you have recovered from the poison. You did well. Bring the Arab here and leave us alone together.”

The Arab entered the tent, saluted the priest and seated himself on the ground.

“I remember your face,” continued the priest when the fidalgo had gone. “Was it not you who rescued my countrymen from slavery in the village of Inyaka?”

“I am that man,” answered Manhuesa. “My grievance is this. The stout Portuguese with the flame-coloured hair” — (Manhuesa did not know that Temple was of a different nationality to the Portuguese) — “gave me in gratitude a jewel. The jewel is not as valuable as rumour has said, but it repaid me for what I had to spend in redeeming him and his companions. Mopango, because he lent me

the money and the slaves with which to trade, is entitled to two-thirds of my profits but to nothing else. He had no claim on the jewel, but he has taken it forcibly from me. He says that he will sell the jewel and give me a share of the money, but the jewel is mine alone. Senhor, I rescued your countrymen from slavery. Will you not obtain justice for me?"

"I would be unworthy of my holy calling if I did not endeavour to obtain justice for all men, Christian or Mohammedan," replied Monclaros, graciously. "How much more should I endeavour to help you to whom my countrymen owe so much gratitude? It will be difficult, however, to persuade the general to enforce your claim. He has a strange love for Mopango, and indeed he relies on your sheikh to lend him three thousand miticals of gold which he needs for the payment of the troops. We must therefore go to work carefully. I suppose that for the present Mopango has hidden the jewel where you cannot find it?"

"It is locked in an iron chest that stands in Mopango's hall; when he sleeps it is put under his bed," replied Manhuesa.

For an hour the priest asked a number of questions that Manhuesa must have seen, had he not been blinded by greed and hate of his chief, had not the remotest connection with the Nour Jehan. The questions were so skilfully put, however, and had so little connection with each other, that in answering them Manhuesa did not realize that he was revealing

the exact size of the Arab community, the number and the trustworthiness of their slaves, what arms they possessed, what precaution they took against midnight robbery. Having acquired all the information he desired, Monclaros dismissed the Arab, saying —

“If I am to help you, you must obey my instructions implicitly. Have patience, return to your own house, say nothing on this matter to anyone. When the moment is propitious I will send for you, but remember, when I take you to the general, you must say only what I shall direct you to say.”

Three days later a messenger came running to Monclaros, saying that Ruy Nunes Barreto, the son of the general, was dying, and desired absolution. The priest sent a servant to bring Manhoesa to his tent, and then hurried to the dying man. Having performed his priestly function, he returned and had a long conversation with the Arab, which was interrupted by the news that the general's son was dead.

“Stay here till I send for you, then come and tell your tale,” he whispered to Manhoesa, then walked slowly to the dead man's tent.

The bereaved father was sitting dejectedly by the side of his son's body. Monclaros respected his obvious grief for a while, but presently spoke.

“I am loath to force myself on your Excellency's notice, but it is imperative for the safety of all that I should do so. Indisputable proof has come to my ears that your dear son was poisoned.”

Barreto sprang to his feet.

"How? Who did it? Tell me his name," he cried. "May I burst if I do not kill him."

"Ask your son's servant if he did not drink yesterday some milk that the Arabs sent him?"

"Is this true?" demanded Barreto of the soldier servant who was preparing the body for burial.

"It is true, your Excellency. All day he ate nothing, but in the evening he asked for milk. There was none to be had in the camp, and knowing that the Moors have goats, I thought it no harm to send and beg some from them. I do not know who sent it."

"The milk was poisoned," interrupted Monclaros. "A Moor who wishes us well and hates such treachery confessed it to me. He is in my tent at this moment. Send and question him."

Manhuesa was brought. He said that on the previous day a Hindoo slave had come to the Arab's houses begging milk for Ruy Nunes Barreto, that an Arab named Mujugane had provided it, and that it was known to all the Arabs that the milk was poisoned. Barreto might have inquired why, knowing this, Manhuesa had not spoken in time to save his son's life, but he was too distraught with misery and rage to see discrepancies in the story. He gave Manhuesa a gold piece and dismissed him. Then, without looking again on the dead, he strode to his own quarters, followed by the Jesuit.

"Pardon me, Father Monclaros, I have wronged you," he said, when he reached his tent, "and I have done my king disservice in leaving these traitors in peace." Then was Barreto guilty of the crime which sullied his long and honourable career. "Send for Dom Vasco Homem. Call the colonels, Antonio de Mello, Thome de Sousa, Jeronymo d'Aguiar and Jeronymo d'Andrada. May Satan and all his angels seize me if I do not exterminate this brood of hell-hounds!"

That night the whole Portuguese force was mustered secretly and led in five companies against the Arabs. Two companies patrolled the river in canoes lest any should escape by water. The other three surrounded the Arab village. At a whispered signal, passed from man to man, the three companies closed in, each man keeping close to his neighbour lest any fugitive should break through their ranks. Slowly and silently they advanced, entering one house after another and arresting its sleeping occupants. So well had the plan been devised and carried out, that without a single warning shout being raised, without a single blow being struck, every inhabitant of the village except the Arabs' native slaves was driven into the great courtyard of Mopango's house. Here seventeen leading members of the community were bound and led away to the Portuguese camp. The rest were murdered where they stood. Systematic search was then made of each house, and everything of value it contained claimed in the name of the king, after which the

soldiers were allowed to quarrel among themselves over such poor booty as remained.

What happened to the seventeen senior members of the Arab community we learn from Monclaros' journal. "The men we arrested included the Sheikh and also one of the traitorous Moors who had instigated Monomatapa to slay the holy martyr, Father Dom Gonzalo. All were condemned and put to death by strange inventions. Some were impaled alive; some were tied to the tops of trees forcibly brought together, and then set free, by which means they were torn asunder; others were opened up the back with hatchets; some were killed by mortars, in order to strike terror into the natives, and others were delivered to the soldiers, who wreaked their wrath upon them with clubs. The booty taken from the Arab village I estimate to be worth 140,000 cruzados."

The Arabs were executed in pairs, two each day. While a single one remained alive Father Sebastian spent every waking moment with them fervently entreating them to save their souls by becoming Christian. One poor wretch named Mohammed Joane consented and was baptized. If he thought to save his life by so doing he got little satisfaction. The Dominican friar pleaded for his life, but was able only to obtain an order that he should be hanged instead of put to death by "a strange invention," and was with him at his last moment, holding a crucifix before his eyes.

The Nour Jehan was not returned to Manhuesa,

who indeed had no use for it, for he was one of the Arabs who were murdered in Mopango's courtyard. It was again claimed by Father Monclaros and sent to the Archbishop of Goa, who gave it to a church of Monclaros' Order, where henceforth it blazed in the golden crown of Our Lady of Mercy.

CHAPTER XVII

NEWS FROM MOZAMBIQUE

AFTER the massacre of the Arabs it was noticed that the death rate among the men and the animals remained as high as before. The circumstance was regarded as proof that the Arabs had done their sinister work not by poison, which acts only once, but by witchcraft, the effect of which may linger indefinitely, and in consequence Monclaros' subordinate priests were kept hard at work exorcising demons and sprinkling holy water over everything which might conceivably benefit by the operation.

There was work that they might well have done in other directions as the weeks passed, for when the building of the fort was finished deadly inaction settled down on the camp, and the bored soldiers, having no work to do and no legitimate means of relieving the tedium of the dreary days, turned the camp into as lively a hell as that which some had known in the slums of Goa. To counteract the evil and to remove its cause Father Sebastian with Barreto's permission set volunteers to build a church, and when this was done to set up crosses and altars, until Sena was as well supplied with these as any pilgrimage

centre of Europe. In addition to this work he founded two confraternities; one, which he named "Our Lady of the Rosary," was to endeavour to suppress gambling, the other "The Sacred Name of Jesus," was directed against the sin of swearing. Father Sebastian much amused the general by indignantly refusing his offer to become patron of the latter order until such time as his conversation should be more fitting the holder of such an office.

Despite the efforts of the priests, death and demoralisation stalked through the camp. Though his officers urged him to advance, Barreto would not give the order to march until he had news that reinforcements and still more necessary supplies were following him. Messenger after messenger was sent to Mozambique with letters to Brandao asking if no more ships had arrived from Portugal and charging him to send immediately news of their arrival. Day after day Barreto stood for hours together on a hill that commanded a view of the river and watched for the return of the messengers.

Nothing is more utterly miserable than life in a standing camp of a column that should be on the march, for in such a camp all the hardships of active service must be endured with none of the excitement of active warfare to relieve the tedium. The soldiers, both men and officers, gambled, quarrelled, fought, shirked even the small duties assigned to them, and were almost grateful when the necessity of burying a comrade relieved the monotony of the long hot days. The life was hard for all; hard for the

soldiers who had no employment for their idle hands, hard for the officers who wanted to push on, hard for the general who ate out his heart waiting for news of the long-delayed supplies, and inexpressibly hard for the poor girl who had been sent to the dreary settlement by men who considered her own feelings as little as they would have considered those of a horse or a mule.

Barreto had done what he could for her bodily comfort. He had sent with all speed to Mozambique to provide her with a suitable wardrobe. He had assigned the best house in Sena to her use, courteously insisting on vacating it himself and taking up his quarters in a small thatched hut. There being no Portuguese woman in the settlement, he had directed that a negress who could speak Portuguese, the mistress of one of the Portuguese residents of Sena, should live with and wait upon her. The woman was honest and kindly according to her lights, but having been bred in an atmosphere of sensuality, and having no idea that vice could be loathsome to the delicate convent-bred girl, or indeed to any human being, she proved as repulsive a companion as the girl could well have had.

Dona Beatriz was more utterly lonely than she had ever been in her life. She rose every morning and sat listlessly in the bare scantily-furnished hall of the mud-walled house, doing nothing because there was nothing for her to do, silent because there was no one but her empty-headed, ignorant, animal-minded attendant to talk to, welcoming the advent

of meal-time because the mechanical task of eating such poor food as the camp afforded gave some relief from the inactivity of the rest of the day. Sometimes in the cool of the evening she walked through the camp and out among the sandy dunes that fringe the bank of the mighty river, but the scenery had no attraction for her; she looked over the great waste of water, the dreary levels of flat swampy land beyond and the distant panorama of sunburnt hills on the horizon, and shuddered to think that fate had condemned her to spend her life amid those unlovely surroundings.

Sometimes cavalleiros, suitors not so much for her hand as for the post which would be conferred on whoever married her, paid solemn court to Dona Beatriz. Their attentions might have pleased her under other circumstances, but since she regarded them more as prospective jailers than as prospective husbands, their formal wooing distressed her and their ponderous, carefully-rehearsed compliments nauseated her. Dom Vicente was not one of those who presented themselves as applicants for Dona Beatriz's hand and office. An inquiry had been made into his conduct by a board of fidalgoes, but as Barreto had many more important things to think about, and as Father Monclaros had been the principal member of the board, the trial had no result, the matter was gradually forgotten, and Dom Vicente was allowed to worm his way back into the society of honourable men. He did not, however, make any further attempts to claim Dona Beatriz

and the office she had in her gift. This diffidence was due not to modesty or shame but to the fact that he no longer desired to become captain of Sena. The place had never been as rich as he had been led to suppose, and since nearly all the people from whom it would have been possible to extort money had been massacred it no longer possessed attractions for the man who had crossed the Indian Ocean for the sake of wringing a fortune from its inhabitants. Other fidalgoes recognized that by massacring the Arabs they had killed the golden-egged goose, so that Dona Beatriz's suitors were drawn mostly from among men of lower rank, the more needy and less ambitious cavalleiros. They came, they paid hackneyed compliments to the lady's eyebrows, they gave her particulars of their pedigrees, announced themselves as dying with longing for a kind word, and then, as Dona Beatriz could not contemplate the permanent companionship of any one of them without disgust, they went philosophically away, trusting that the saints would send them better luck in some other direction.

Dona Beatriz had one constant visitor who was always welcome. Father Sebastian would steal half an hour occasionally from his many self-imposed duties to tell her of his ambitions and his dreams. The good man frankly acknowledged that he had no love for Sena. The native inhabitants, he explained, had come so much under the influence of followers of the False Prophet and Portuguese of the lowest type that Satan had obtained unassailable dominion

over their hearts. He meant, therefore, as soon as God should show him an opportunity, to turn his back on Sena as Lot turned his back on Sodom, and go far away into the interior, among men uncontaminated by European vices or Mahommedan blasphemies, and there find either the joy of winning souls for the Kingdom of Christ or the glory of a martyr's crown. His ideals stirred Dona Beatriz's imagination. The influence of the pious nuns who had educated her had given her a deep love for spiritual things, but she was too much the daughter of her gallant father to have any relish for a monotonous convent life. She beguiled many of her lonely hours with golden dreams, though she knew that her sex debarred her from making the dreams reality, in which she pictured herself as facing the dangers of the unknown interior as her father and her grandfather had faced the dangers of unknown seas, of winning a bloodless conquest over some heathen tribe, of tending their sick, teaching their children, of winning them by the force of love from bloodshed and violence, and so preparing a field for such men as Father Sebastian to work in.

Possibly it was rather the romantic than the spiritual element of these idle day-dreams that appealed to the imagination of the conquistador's daughter, but even the romantic element in it had no charm for her unless the picture she drew in her mind included one stronger than herself to bear the brunt of the hardship and the danger. Often when letting her imagination conjure up this picture she

blushed to find that it insisted on giving her as a companion the man who during the past year had softened her hardships and shielded her from danger. Dona Beatriz had always known that these day-dreams were impracticable and foolish. When the image of John Temple became an increasingly large factor in them she felt that they were immodest and therefore wicked. Convinced that the devil had sent them, she endeavoured resolutely to drive them from her mind.

Often her thoughts turned to the months she had spent in Inyaka's village, and she was surprised at finding in her heart some regret that she had ever been rescued. In Sena she had security, comparative comfort, and as much food as she needed; in Inyaka's village she had slept on the hard floor of a native hut, had worn rags, had eaten such food as no beggar in Lisbon would have picked out of the gutter, and had never known what danger might menace her. In Sena, however, she had no companionship save that of her successive suitors and of a woman with whom she had nothing in common, whereas in Inyaka's village she had had the constant companionship of a stout-hearted clean-minded man who did not woo her at all, but who cared for her, protected her, and cheered her, and whom she knew instinctively would have given his life to save her from death or insult. In Sena she had nothing whatever to do except amuse herself, if she could find any way of doing so; in Inyaka's village she had worked hard and constantly, and worked gladly,

because the harder she worked the more could she lighten the load of the man to whom she owed so much. She had cooked Temple's food, had accompanied him to the forest when he went to gather firewood, and returning had carried a bundle on her own shoulders; she had tended the fire with which he melted the metals he worked, and when there was hammering to be done she herself had done it, lest his hands should become too weary to do the delicate work which the Inyaka demanded of him.

Unaccustomed by training either to feel or to witness the struggle for existence, in her great need she had accepted Temple's protection as naturally and with as little thought as a child accepts the protection of one whom it instinctively trusts. Temple had asked nothing in return for it, and such return as she had been able to make, as when she had plaited sandals for him, had been prompted by a feeling akin to a child's instinctive desire to please a benefactor rather than by any sense of obligation. The curious partnership in which the stronger member had cared for the weaker without asking for reward, and the weaker had accepted this care with naïve simplicity, had grown into a union in which the girl had felt the man to be a part of her life. Since their arrival at Sena this union had been abruptly dissolved. Temple, having no further excuse for being near her, had set himself to perform the duties assigned to him and had seen her rarely, and then only by chance. As the weeks went by she began to realize that he had passed out

of her life, leaving a void that no amount of comfort or security could fill.

The idle months passed unmarked save by the slow, orderly procession of the seasons. During the months of January, February, and March, torrents of rain alternated with bursts of fiery sunshine. In April the landscape turned from green to golden, and the mighty river, feeling at last the influence of rain that had fallen far inland, began to rise. It rose slowly, irresistibly, a foot higher every day; first the sandbanks, then the reed-clad islets disappeared, then the river became full to the top of its banks, and great masses of matted vegetation as long and as broad as modern battleships swept majestically down the stream. In May the river fell again as slowly as it had risen, and the landscape turned from gold to grey. In June newly formed islands appeared, and the river, from being a mile-wide stream, once more split into a score of insignificant rivulets meandering amongst wastes of sand.

One evening early in July Dona Beatriz, followed by her attendant, set out for her usual walk among the sand-dunes that fringed the river. Her way did not lie past the camp, but she nevertheless made a detour towards it, assuring herself that it was a desire to see Father Sebastian's completed church rather than the hope of seeing Temple that led her thither. Not seeing the Englishman, she unaccountably forgot to look for the church, and walked on past the ruined houses of the

Mohammedans, the courtyards of which were already breast-high with grass and weeds, until she reached a sandy promontory that jutted out into the river.

Barreto was sitting there. He rose to greet her, and then pointed to a black spot on the gleaming silver of the sunlit river.

"Do you see that canoe?" he said. "I am hoping it will bring me word that his Majesty's ships have reached Mozambique at last, and that reinforcements with fresh supplies are already on their way here. Directly I get that news we shall march, for the reinforcements will be able to follow our footsteps faster than we, who will have to break a road for ourselves, can travel. If they have already started, they should overtake us before the end of August or by the beginning of September at latest. That reminds me, Dona Beatriz. I must make some arrangements on your behalf before I go. Do you wish to remain at Sena and make one of my officers happy, or will you adopt the Viceroy's alternative suggestion, and seek peace in some nunnery in Portugal?"

Dona Beatriz plucked nervously at a stiff saw-edged blade of yellow grass, looked ruefully at a cut it made on her finger, and replied —

"I do not think I want to go into a nunnery — yet."

The general seated himself by her side. "It is very natural that you shouldn't. I have another suggestion. I have a daughter in Portugal, unmarried, living at Belem in a little house among

vineyards overlooking the Tagus. She is not rich, but what is enough for one is enough for two. I need not say how proud she would be to do any service to the daughter of my old comrade, Dom Joao Correa da Mattos. As for money, I — that is—I mean that could easily be arranged. She is a good woman. You would learn to love her. There need not be any question of ——”

Barreto, unaccustomed to cloak charity in courtly phrases, floundered into silence, but Dona Beatriz, too much occupied with her own thoughts to realize that he was making her an extraordinarily generous offer, continued silent for some minutes. At last, turning away her head and blushing hotly, she asked —

“I understand that whoever marries me will be appointed Captain of Sena. Does that apply to any man, senhor?”

“Most certainly.”

“I mean, supposing — supposing he was an —” her confusion was so great that she scarcely recognized her own voice — “supposing he was not a Portuguese?”

Barreto started, and looked at her curiously.

“I don’t understand. Who do you mean? Ah! I have it. The Englishman is the lucky man. Well, upon my soul, he deserves it!”

He sprang to his feet, and took a few paces backwards and forwards.

“I forgot,” he continued. “I could not spare him to you till after the campaign. He is the only

member of my staff who can speak the native tongues. While we have been idling here, he has set himself so thoroughly to learn them that he can talk without an interpreter to any man who comes into the camp, though it be from a hundred leagues away. He has such a way with the natives, too, that he can get three times as much work from a gang of slaves as any one of my officers, and yet with never a blow struck. Do you know that the envoy I sent to Monomatapa was drowned on the way? I had intended to send the Englishman in his place. The king's service must come before all other considerations. Whoever else stays behind, he must go forward."

By this time Dona Beatriz was plucking furiously at the stiff dry grass, heedless of the fact that its razor edges were leaving long, bleeding scratches on her fingers. The general stood still, shaded his eyes to watch the approaching canoe, then, seating himself again, took one of Dona Beatriz's hands in his.

"It is hard for you both, dear lady," he said, "but the king's service is paramount. Listen. If this Englishman acquits himself in this campaign as I am assured he will, I shall make it my duty to recommend him to the special favour of his Majesty. Who knows what honour he may be pleased to confer on him? Here comes the canoe. I will stop it, and see what news it brings. Wait here for me."

He waved his hands to the paddlers, and hurried down to the margin of the water. The canoe turned,

and came towards him. A Portuguese soldier leapt out on to the bank, and handed him a note. Barreto hastily broke the seal, read the letter, and hurried back to Dona Beatriz.

“At last! The king’s ships have reached Mozambique,” he cried joyfully. “If Senhor Brandao has carried out my orders, the reinforcements are already on their way. We shall march at dawn. And you, dear lady—you will wait here and pray for our success, and for the gallant Englishman. If he serves me but half as well as I expect, he shall have the best appointment in my gift when the campaign is over.”

CHAPTER XVIII

A PRAYER TO ST. ANTHONY

As Dona Beatriz sat over her lonely meal that night she heard cheer upon cheer echo from the camp. The soldiers had been told that they were to march at last.

There was scarcely a man in the column who did not believe that he would come back laden with as much gold as he could carry. The intense heat from which they suffered was regarded even by the educated Portuguese as evidence of gold in the country, for whereas some learned men believed that the fierce heat of the sun turned baser metals to gold, others believed that heat was caused by the abundance of that metal in the ground. Antonio Caiado, the Portuguese adventurer, who had been at Monomatapa's court when Dom Gonzalo had been murdered, had seen a nugget worth four thousand cruzados brought to the king. Another had seen the flash of gold in the soil round the roots of a tree, and by digging, had obtained nuggets to the value of ten or twelve thousand cruzados. These stories had gone the round of the camp, losing nothing in the telling, until the soldiers believed

that when they reached his country, even if Monomatapa did not surrender his treasure houses, they would only have to root up the trees to obtain as much gold as they could take away. Little wonder if it was long that night before the excitement died down, or that the Southern Cross was sloping towards the western horizon before sleep brooded over the camp.

Dona Beatriz could not sleep. Her heart burned with a desire — and all her training told her that the desire was a shameful one — that one man should find a means of bidding her farewell before the bugles blew the signal to break camp. Why did he not come? Did he care nothing for her? A word from her would bring him, she knew, but how could she utter that word without shame? Earnestly she prayed for help to resist the temptation of sending for him. The younger of the nuns who had educated her had often told her that any appeal for help in affairs of the heart should be made to St. Anthony of Lisbon (he whom Italians called St. Anthony of Padua), because the affairs of lovers were his especial care. To him therefore she knelt and prayed for purity, modesty, and especially strength to resist the temptation that assailed her. Now it may be that the kindly saint was puzzled at receiving a prayer so different from those which lovers usually make to him, or it may be that as his duties include the restoration of lost articles, he had got into the habit of bringing parted lovers together, or very likely the reason was that he knew what was best for

the girl — whatever the cause, the more Dona Beatriz prayed the stronger grew the temptation against which she was fighting. Three times she knelt and prayed for St. Anthony's aid. Three times she rose to her feet and stood at her window, looking towards the camp and yearning to hear well-known footsteps. At last her human instincts overcame her. She uttered one hurried passionate prayer to her own favourite saint to obtain pardon for her weakness, and then called her attendant.

The woman, who had been snoring on a mat at the foot of the bed, sat up, yawned, and asked what was wanted.

"Can you take a message for me secretly into the camp?" whispered Dona Beatriz.

The negress chuckled. Accustomed to a life which owed its savour to low intrigue, she had found her present service most deadly dull. Now it seemed as if it were to become more interesting. She grinned as she assured her mistress that she could summon any man in the camp without creating the slightest suspicion.

"Do you know a man who was one of those with whom I came to Sena?" asked Dona Beatriz. "The man who gave the Arab a jewel to bring us here."

The negress exploded with mirth.

"The red-headed man! Tsitsilamoto, my people call him. The name means hair-of-fire. Why, I could call him more easily than any other! I will swear he is within twenty paces of our door."

"How? Why?" demanded Dona Beatriz, her shame turning to hot indignation. "What business has he here?"

The woman shrugged her shoulders. "He is like the dog who could not eat honey but would not let the rabbit have it. Every night he watches your door, and if another cavalleiro comes he hits him on the head with his strong hands and drives him away."

"Why should men want to come to my house at night?" demanded Dona Beatriz.

The negress laughed again so heartily that for some minutes she could not speak. Then she explained, and the explanation, coarsely expressed by a woman who had never known modesty or chastity, redoubled the girl's gratitude towards the man who had done so much for her.

"Quick, help me to dress," she said. "Then go and bring him here."

Dona Beatriz waited at the open door of her house while the negress went on her errand. Two minutes later, Temple stepped on to the verandah and halted two paces from where she stood.

"Dona Beatriz!" he whispered hoarsely.

"Senhor Temple," she replied softly, "I wanted to — to thank you for ——. Ah, senhor, could I let you go without a word?"

There was silence for a moment. Then, in a voice that sounded strange and hollow, Temple replied,

"There was nothing to thank me for."

Dona Beatriz's blood seemed to turn to lead.

"After all you have done for me, I wished to

say good-bye," she continued. "I think that I will go back to Portugal when the king's ship returns." Her words were formal and cold but her unhappiness showed itself in every quavering syllable.

Temple started forward.

"To Portugal!" he cried. "Then I shall never see you again!"

There followed a moment of seemingly age-long silence. Dona Beatriz felt as if a gulf had suddenly come between her and the man she loved — a gulf that widened with each painful heart-beat. Temple's head swam dizzily. His sight grew dim, and the lights of the dying fires in the distant camp seemed obscured as by a mist. As a sleeper oppressed with nightmare tries in vain to cry out, so he opened his lips to speak and could make no sound. At last the words came, and in his ears his own voice sounded strange and thin.

"Listen, senhora, I am a poor man, a prisoner with no property in the world but my sword, and you are a lady of rank with a rich appointment in your gift ——"

"To give to whom I will," she murmured, and as she spoke her spirit crossed the gulf that had yawned between them. "To whom should I give it but to the man I love?"

The mist that clouded Temple's senses still lingered, but now it was golden-hued and seemed to envelop them both, shielding and separating them from the rest of the world. Then he knew nothing except that he was holding Dona Beatriz in his arms,

and that all his life and all its pain had been but a preparation for this moment of complete and utter happiness.

Then Dona Beatriz laughed, a soft, low, musical laugh of content and happiness, and pushed away his arms. The laugh broke the spell, and brought him back to the commonplace world, a world however that was infinitely fairer and richer than it had ever seemed before.

"Let us sit down," she said; "there is only one chair, but you shall sit at my feet, as a humble knight should."

She bent over him and kissed his head, then ruffled his hair with her fingers.

"And you would have gone without a word!" she said reproachfully.

"Ah, dear one, I meant to win a fortune with my sword so that I might offer it to you without reproach."

"Leaving me to eat out my heart without knowing whether I was anything to you. How cruel men are! How little they understand!"

Presently she whispered in his ear. He laughed and whispered back again.

"John, John," she murmured, the sharp Northern accents of Temple's Christian name ill suiting her Southern tongue. "Have I been overbold? Are you ashamed of me, John?"

For answer he kissed her hand, and as he did so the wailing note of the bugle called the soldiers to wake and prepare for the march.

CHAPTER XIX

INTO THE UNKNOWN

THE column marched out of Sena, weakened by the loss of fifty arquebusiers and four cavalleiros, who were left to hold the fort under command of Senhor Furtado — weakened, too, by the loss of over a hundred men who would never more be roused by any trumpet that mortal man could blow.

No one had obeyed the order to prepare for the march with more eagerness than Father Sebastian. He made a bundle of the breviary, the surplice and the sacred vessels which had been grudgingly given him by the Jesuit priests who accompanied the expedition, and bound it to the foot of the crucifix which he had saved from the wreck of the *Sao Raphael*. Having completed these simple preparations several hours before dawn, he waited eagerly for the bugle's call. While the soldiers had dreamed wild dreams of the gold they hoped to win, his thoughts had lingered on the number of souls he hoped to save from everlasting fire. Yet at the last moment he had remembered with uneasiness that he was leaving a young girl friendless and practically alone in a camp of rough and unruly men. He had prayed earnestly for guidance. Then he remembered

that the Father Superior of his Order had taught him whenever his conscience hesitated between two courses, to choose the least attractive. Sadly the aged Dominican told himself that his reward was not yet won, and with many sighs he determined to go on with the commonplace work that was nearest to his hand. Sadly he stood to watch the soldiers march out of the camp without him.

The bulk of the column marched along the river bank and broke a road for the six pieces of heavy ordnance which, mounted on waggons, were drawn through swamp and thicket by the native camp followers. The provisions and ammunition were carried in barges. When the wind failed, these were warped upstream with fearful labour. As they stood high out of the water they could not be paddled, and as they drew too much water to float in the shallows they could not be poled. Light canoes, therefore, went ahead with cables and grapnels, which were dropped overboard when the cable's length had been reached. The men in the barges then hauled on the cables, dragging the heavy barges foot by foot upstream till it was time to drop anchor and send the canoes ahead again. The men who toiled on land to break a way for the waggons sometimes envied their comrades in the barges, but never with half the fervour that these men envied them. Men who had fallen sick were put into the waggons and transferred to the barges every time a junction between the land force and the river force was effected.

Dom Vicente was the first man to be thus transferred. Unlike most of his fellow fidalgoes, he had not the least desire to march against Monomatapa, for he had hoped to remain in Sena the better to work for Barreto's downfall. On the second day's march, therefore, he contrived to stake his foot, and asked to be sent back to the settlement. Barreto, brusquely replying that he could spare no men, put him on board a barge, and, because a wounded foot does not incapacitate the hands, saw to it that he worked his passage. Except during the storm, it was the first time that this fidalgo had ever done manual work, and probably the first time that he had ever done anything useful. His companions noticed that his wounded foot healed with remarkable rapidity.

Though the soldiers laboured from dawn till dusk, the column scarcely ever advanced more than a league and a half in a day. The fearful toil under the blazing sun began to damp the general zeal for conquest, and, in addition, fears both justifiable and superstitious demoralized the men. Lions followed the land forces and carried off donkeys and sometimes even men. Crocodiles took toll of men who went to drink in the river. One day a cavalleiro, who had gone ahead to look for a way round a swamp, was gored by a buffalo, and on another occasion a rhinoceros, breathing fire (as all who saw it declared), charged through the thickest part of the column, leaving several dead and dying men behind it. Most of the Portuguese, never having

seen these monsters before, and having heard but vague accounts of them, regarded them with more terror than they actually deserved, and at every turn expected to see a dragon waiting to contest their advance. The uncouth shapes of euphorbias and gigantic baobab trees lent mystery to the landscape, and at night the weird cries of jackals and hyænas chilled with superstitious fears the hearts of men who would have faced any human foe with a light heart. Being surrounded with so much that was strange, new and terrible, and seeing their comrades day by day suddenly stricken down by inexplicable diseases, the Portuguese began to feel that in penetrating Africa they were advancing into Satan's special dominions. To be safely back in Goa or Portugal, within reach of holy water and the comforting sound of church bells, many a member of the expedition would gladly have given his share of whatever gold was to be won.

By the end of August the column had marched some sixty leagues from Sena and had reached a broad shallow tributary of the Zambesi, named the Ruenya, up which the guides said they must now march. As it was impossible to take the barges any further, a base camp was formed for the sick, eighty in number, under the command of Ruy de Mello, the cavalleiro who had been wounded by the buffalo. The Ruenya, which winds amongst lofty wooded hills, is perhaps the most beautiful stream in Africa, but it affords a poor road for an army column. The heights on each side of it were examined, and found

to be impossible for the waggons; so that to find level ground over which to march, it was necessary to follow the course of the river. In places the steep flanks of hills jutted out into the stream. To cross these the guns had to be taken from the waggons and hauled on skids, piece by piece, up the hillside, and even the empty waggons needed a hundred men apiece to drag them over these promontories. The stream was crossed and recrossed a dozen times, and it seemed as if all the crocodiles in the whole length of the river learned to await these occasions, for it was never crossed without one or more men being dragged under the water and carried away. Progress was so slow that often the fires which lit the camp at night served to cook the midday meal of the following day.

The time had now arrived when Barreto had expected the reinforcements to overtake him with supplies. Every evening he took his stand on some eminence, and looked back along the path his column had beaten, hoping to see some cloud of dust that might indicate the approach of the men he supposed to be hurrying after him. There came a day, a week after leaving Ruy de Mello's camp, when there remained just sufficient provision in hand to carry his column back to Sena. The general calculated the average weekly death-rate in the column and determined to advance another three days before deciding what to do. At the end of the three days there was still no sign of relief. He determined that if the worst came to the worst his

men could march back on half-rations, and progress was now so slow that it seemed as if the relief column must soon overtake them. After ten days more there was scarcely provision enough left to carry his column on half-rations back to Sena, even allowing for deaths on the way. Father Monclaros, knowing the state of affairs, was now constantly worrying the general to march back towards the relief column, warning him that he was answerable to God and the King of Portugal for the lives of the men; but Barreto declared that if necessary he would abandon the guns and the waggons, so that the soldiers could retreat the faster, and refused to stay the advance.

The strength of the column was now dwindling fast. Every second or third day a dozen or more men, weakened by dysentery or the after effects of fever, were sent back to join the other sick men at Ruy de Mello's camp, and each draft so sent back needed healthy men to guard them.

Twenty-five days after leaving the Zambesi, the column left the Ruenya and began to advance along the saddle of a mountain spur towards the great plateau on which Monomatapa lived. Now a new anxiety arose. The nerves of the soldiers had been weakened by excessive toil, sickness, privation and superstitious fears. They began to be still further harassed by the knowledge that they were surrounded by an enemy that they could not see.

At first the evidences of the invisible foe were slight. The men in the lead found marks on the

sand, and tufts of reeds tied in bunches. Of these they took little notice, not knowing that those who tied these reeds and made these marks, had done so in the hope that it would have the effect of making the feet of the Portuguese become entangled, and their wits confused by force of what modern anthropologists term sympathetic magic. The native camp followers, however, understood the signs and trembled.

The ground over which the Portuguese marched, too, was scattered with minute cone-shaped thorns. To the well-shod soldiers these mattered not at all, but they seriously occupied the minds of the barefooted camp followers. These latter, knowing that the thorns had not fallen from shrubs in the neighbourhood, recognized the work of an enemy and warned the Portuguese to be ready for attack.

Confirmation of the warning soon came. One night a number of unseen men took up a position near by, but out of sight of the camp, and lifting up their voices began to abuse the Portuguese, describing with minute details the lingering and painful deaths that were being devised for them. The guides said that the enemy were subjects of a chief named Mongasi, a vassal of Monomatapa, who had suddenly sprung into prominence some years before, and whose wars had been so successful that it was expected that he would soon be as powerful as Monomatapa himself and able to throw off his allegiance to the paramount monarch. Next morning it was

found that three hundred of the camp followers had deserted.

Throughout the next day voices of invisible men hurled defiance at the travellers. A cavalleiro who had been sent ahead to reconnoitre was found impaled on a stake when the column overtook him. That night triple guards were set, and an inner guard watched the camp followers lest any more should attempt to desert.

On the following day, though they could still see no enemy, the bush seemed alive with men, for the shouting of challenges was continuous and every gully echoed to the thrumming of unseen drums. The soldiers, exasperated at having their nerves kept constantly on the rack, loudly called to the general to attack, and Barreto could scarcely restrain some of the more hot-headed from charging madly, without orders and without organization, towards the voices.

That night it seemed as if the enemy had disappeared, for there was at first no more abuse, nor noise from drums. On a sudden, however, a clear voice, that sounded as if it came from within a hundred yards of the camp, broke the silence with the grim message —

“Mongasi is rejoiced at your coming, and bids you make haste for he is hungry. His bread is ready for the meal, but he lacks meat to eat with it. Hasten. Hasten.” Then a furious noise of drumming arose and continued throughout the night.

CHAPTER XX

“THE THUNDER OF THE CAPTAINS AND THE SHOUTING”

Few men in the camp slept that night. Fear alone would have kept most of them awake ; for though the courage that nerves a man's arm when an enemy is within striking distance was common enough among the Portuguese, they had little of the kind of courage that keeps a man cool when in darkness he awaits the attack of an invisible foe. Noise banished sleep for those whose nerves were tranquil. Outside the camp there was the thunder of hundreds of drums ; within it the native camp-followers added to the din by wailing. They did not come of fighting stock, and each man of them, believing that he would never see another sunset, gave vent to his terror by calling, as every African does in pain or distress, on his dead or distant mother, “ *Ohe, mama ! Ohe, mama !* ” they wailed, and fought among themselves for hiding places in and underneath the waggon.

At dawn the camp was put in order to receive an attack. A square was formed. The baggage was piled in the centre around the royal standard of Portugal. The two remaining horses and such

of the other animals that had survived the march were tethered to the waggon wheels. The ordnance was dragged into position; three field-pieces were placed in the front, a swivel-gun in the rear, a demi-cannon on each flank. Then the arquebusiers took up their stations along each side of the square, each supported by a halberdier on his right and a swordsman on his left.

When all things were in readiness, Monclaros raised the crucifix and bade the men kneel. When he had obtained silence he announced that the King of Portugal had procured a special Bull from the Pope which secured salvation for all who should die fighting in the holy war against Monomatapa. Then, after reciting a general confession and absolution, he concluded with a few vigorous words exhorting the soldiers to fight valiantly for their King and Church.

A long nerve-racking interval followed. The square had been formed on an open plain that afforded no cover by which the enemy could approach unseen, for some days before a bush fire had swept across the hills, and the ground, instead of being covered fathom deep with grass, was bare and black. On the hills above Mongasi's men were forming for the attack. The Portuguese could see their sorcerers endeavouring to make them invulnerable by sprinkling the ranks with nasty concoctions over which incantations had been said, and their captains haranguing them to bring them to the state of nervous excitement without reaching which no African can fight.

At last a great shout arose, and from three sides the densely packed mass began to move. As a foaming stream pours down a torrent bed, dividing where boulders check its course to reunite below, so, like a black flood, the savages thundered down the hillside. Where naked rocks obstructed their progress the flood parted until those behind, impatient of delay, leapt on to the obstacle and streamed over it, hiding it from sight as a stream in spate overtops and hides the boulders in its bed. With a roar of many voices the black torrent came on. The arquebusiers blew their matches into a glow, the swordsmen tightened their grips on their swords, the halberdiers moistened their hands, dug the heels of their weapons into the ground, and braced themselves to meet the expected shock. Suddenly the oncoming horde halted and was silent. The ranks parted, and a hideous, white-headed old crone, hung with feathers and dead men's bones, hobbled to the front. Holding up her naked skinny arms she screamed a comprehensive curse against the Portuguese. Then taking dust from a gourd she flung it into the air and wailed a hideous chant.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Barreto. "Senhor Temple, you know the ways of these people. What does that old hag think to do to us?"

The Englishman laughed. "She is trying to blind us by art magic."

"To blind us!" exclaimed a gunner. "May I burst if I don't blind her." He took deliberate

aim and put a match to his falconet. So well did he aim that the cast-iron ball struck the old woman in the chest and knocked her, a gruesome heap of writhing limbs, back into the savages' ranks. With a shout the Portuguese cheered the clever shot, and the general, taking a gold chain from his neck, flung it round that of the gunner.

The incident spread momentary consternation among the ranks of Mongasi's men; but their captains rallied them, and once again with brave words roused their spirits to fighting pitch. Then a tall naked warrior stood out of the ranks. A head-dress of glistening purple-black feathers covered his head and shoulders. A pair of ox-horns was bound to his forehead, and a magnificent leopard's skin hung from his waist. In the right hand he held a long, broad-bladed spear. In his left he waved a rope of zebra-hide. These he raised above his head, and, in a voice that echoed through the hills, he shouted —

“*Fumb' azungu!*”

Each of his men answered, and the cry, “*Fumb' azungu,*” passed like low thunder down the ranks.

“What does that mean? What is it they cry?” inquired Barreto.

“They cry, ‘Bind the strangers!’” replied Temple. “Do you see that each man carries a strip of hide in his left hand? I suppose they wish to take us alive, to eat at their leisure.”

Twice the black warrior repeated his cry. Twice again it echoed down the ranks. Monclaros, to

give the Portuguese a rallying cry, answered it with, "Sao Thiago!" and the soldiers shouted back, "Sao Thiago and Portugal." Then, chanting a hoarse deep-throated chorus, the savages charged. Whoever should accurately describe such a fight as then took place must have such skill as would depict a nightmare. Plain words of everyday use could not convey an idea of the age-long moment before the impact, followed by maddening turmoil, the roar of arquebus and culverin, the clash of spear on sword, oaths, yells, and the sobbing of labouring lungs. The ashes of the burnt grass, stirred up by the feet of the fighters, rose in acrid pungent dust that filled the mouths and nostrils and choked the throats of the labouring Portuguese. As each man's heated blood rose to his brain, he saw his foe dimly, as through a red mist, and struck at him wildly — blindly.

Every man in the Portuguese ranks, from the general to the most ignorant convict, fought with desperate courage. Dom Vasco Fernandez Homem, the chief of the general's staff, was struck by a spear that pinned his right arm to his side, but he shifted his sword to his left hand and fought on. Barreto's cheek was laid open from ear to chin, but he knew it not while the fight lasted. But of all the men who showed courage that day, none were more conspicuous than was Father Monclaros. The historical records of that fight show that the Jesuit, false priest, liar, traitor though he was, had at least the virtue of utter fearlessness. He ran

from place to place in the square, striding unheeding over the bodies of dying men who cried to him to hear their confessions, carrying the crucifix to wherever the fight was hottest and the ranks of the Portuguese most in danger of breaking. His courage was rewarded. Either by accident or because Mongasi's men guessed the cross to be a mystic symbol, and feared to arouse the anger of Unknown Powers, no arrows fell near where the Jesuit upheld it.

In spite, however, of their courage, their superior arms, and their better discipline, the Portuguese began insensibly to give way before the sheer weight of their enemy. Their ranks had been so thinned by death and sickness that scarcely seven hundred men took part in the fight against Mongasi's men, whereas the latter, according to the most modest of the recorded estimates, numbered over sixteen thousand. Mongasi's men, when exhausted with fighting, gave place to those behind them, and retired a few yards to get their breath; but there was no respite for any one of the Portuguese. Deadly weariness came over them, and they fought on as if in a dreadful dream. The arquebusiers, too hard pressed to reload their pieces, threw them down and drew their swords. The halberdiers grasped their weapons in the middle, in order that they might rain blows the faster, and struck with blade and butt alternately. Every downward stroke now was an agonizing effort, but each man knew that if he ceased for one moment to guard and hack,

to parry and thrust, that moment would be his last. Inch by inch they gave way, till their backs were against the piled baggage, and their feet on the squirming bodies of the camp followers, who were lying on the ground and fighting among themselves, each trying to cover his naked body by worming it under the body of a comrade.

At last the fearful pressure was relieved. The day was hot and windless. The smoke of the cannons had drifted lazily away as the smoke of a camp-fire drifts on a still autumn evening. Suddenly by some trick of the languid air-currents, it drifted back again, and enveloped the Portuguese square with a murky cloud. There was a sudden pause, for no man could see where to strike. The din of battle ceased as suddenly. Then a terrified voice arose from Mongasi's ranks, "Bewitched! bewitched! The wizards have turned day into night!" The cry was taken up. Panic seized the savage warriors. In another moment they had broken their ranks, and were scattering up the surrounding hills, crying, "Bewitched! bewitched!" The Portuguese soldiers dashed the sweat from neck and forehead, shifted their swords to their left hands, closed and unclosed the fingers of their right hands to ease the muscles of their aching sword-arms, recharged their pieces, and then, panting with great, painful gasps, sank upon the ground to rest. The fight seemed to have lasted for hours. In actual point of time it had occupied less than ten minutes.

The general took advantage of the respite to order the men to breakfast. As soon as this was done the column, still keeping its square formation, although no enemy was now in sight, crept slowly forward. An hour after noon the soldiers were hacking their way through a dense thicket, when a cry arose that the savages were about to attack again. Fortunately for the Portuguese, their enemy once more before attacking paused to receive the unholy baptism of their wizards. The delay gave Barreto time to withdraw his men from the thicket and to pile up barriers with the timber that had been felled. Profiting by experience, too, instead of again piling his baggage in the centre of the square he used it and the waggons to strengthen his defences.

It was evident that Mongasi's men, too, had profited by experience. Instead of rushing on their enemies in a disordered rabble they advanced in a formation which some suppose to have been invented by the Zulu despot Chaka, but was in use among warlike African tribes centuries before that barbaric military genius troubled the earth. They marched in a solid mass until just outside the range of the Portuguese guns, then two wings or horns were thrown out from each flank so that their formation resembled in shape the skull of an ox. These wings encircled the Portuguese, still keeping out of range of their cannon, till their points met. Then from all sides at once they charged down on the Portuguese square. Well was it then for the Portuguese that they had piled up defences. These

allowed the swordsmen and halberdiers occasional precious moments in which to take their breath, and afforded the arquebusiers and gunners time to reload their pieces. The first engagement had been a hand-to-hand fight in which before long the seven hundred men must inevitably have been crushed by sixteen thousand. The second was a duel in which the power of gunpowder equalized the odds. For an hour the fight lasted and then the ranks of the savages wavered, thinned, and melted away, leaving fifty Portuguese dead within the square, but nearly six thousand of Mongasi's men dead outside it. So dispirited were the savages that when late that evening the Portuguese reached a village used as a military station by a regiment of Mongasi's warriors they were allowed to occupy it without firing a shot or striking a blow.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TRIUMPH OF MONCLAROS

THE village that the Portuguese had seized was built on the summit of a steep cone-shaped hill. Thus naturally fortified it could, in the hands of Mongasi's people, have been easily held for days against the small Portuguese force. In the hands of the Portuguese, its natural defences being supplemented with artillery, it could be held for an indefinite period against any force that Mongasi or even Monomatapa could bring against it. Barreto, realizing this, determined to encamp there and hold the place until either his reinforcements should arrive or Mongasi should sue for peace. Next day Mongasi's men learned their lesson. They attacked in force, but so great were their losses from cannon and arquebusiers' fire before a single one of their men had struggled far enough uphill to hurl his spear that they withdrew altogether and left the Portuguese masters of the field.

Early in the day that followed the defeat of the savages one of their number came to the Portuguese camp and asked if the general would receive a deputation consisting of twelve of Mongasi's

captains. Barreto sent word that he would receive them at noon, and began to prepare such a reception as would impress their unsophisticated minds. A bale of red cloth, such as had been brought to present to friendly chiefs, was opened and with this an effort was made to give the general's tent as palatial an appearance as possible. A demi-cannon was then dragged to the mouth of the tent and piled with lengths of this cloth to make a throne. Meanwhile three gunners laboured with oil and sand to take the worst of the rust off Barreto's armour. A score each of swordsmen, halberdiers and arquebusiers were then drawn up on either side of the tent-entrance to form a guard of honour. When all things were in readiness Barreto donned his coat of mail and morion, buckled on his sword, handed his shield to a tall halberdier whom he stationed behind him, took his seat on the gun and ordered the deputation to be brought forward.

It was the pick of Mongasi's army that had been chosen to sue for peace. Each man stood at least six feet high, and each was a man of rank, as the Portuguese could guess from their catskin aprons, their feather head-dresses and the ox-horns that were bound to their foreheads. Slowly and humbly the twelve men approached, their heads bent, the spears in their hands held point downwards in token of submission. They advanced to within ten feet of the general, then each laid down his spear, clapped his hands together, scraped his feet in salutation on the

ground (just as a booted man wipes his feet on a door-mat), and squatted on his haunches.

“Stand! Bid them stand!” indignantly cried Monclaros, who had taken up a position by Barreto’s side. “Is it fitting that these men should sit in the presence of the representative of the King of Portugal?”

Temple, who had been summoned to interpret, hurriedly explained that the Kaffirs regarded it as insolent to stand while addressing a superior, and on a sign from Barreto invited the leader of the deputation to speak.

The spokesman clapped his hands again, pointed his chin at the gun on which Barreto was sitting, and in a voice that was shaking with terror said —

“Master! We are afraid of the dragon that your chief is riding. We have seen it spit fire and iron balls. How do we know that it will not take a dislike to us and kill us with its breath?”

“Tell them it will be silent until I bid it roar,” answered Barreto, when this had been translated to him, and as an additional guarantee threw a fold of the cloth over the cannon’s mouth.

“Hearing that the strangers love these things we have brought a little gold and a pair of elephant’s teeth,” continued the spokesman, somewhat reassured, beckoning to a man who approached, saluted, laid a tiny wooden saucer full of gold and a pair of magnificent tusks on the ground before Barreto, saluted again and retired. “Also there is

a little meat, fifty oxen and fifty sheep. It is but little, for we are poor and hungry.”

The Portuguese looked at the plateful of gold with some disgust. It was worth some forty cruzados and their imaginations had got into the habit of thinking of gold by the bucketful. The cattle, however, were welcome, for it was now known that food was becoming woefully scarce. Barreto then commanded wine to be brought, and after first drinking himself (Temple whispered that he must do this to show that the wine was not poisoned), ordered a cupful to be given to each of the headmen. These again violated the Jesuit priest's standards of politeness by turning their backs as they drank.

Cheered by the wine and feeling now more confident, Mongasi's men stated their errand. They said that they were anxious for peace but were not competent to arrange terms, for Mongasi had been carried badly wounded to his own village three days' journey away. They suggested that Barreto should take six of their number as hostages, and send an ambassador with the other six to Mongasi's great place, there to discuss terms of peace with the wounded chief.

While they were speaking an incident occurred which greatly increased their fear of the Portuguese. The only camel that had survived the climate took fright at something, broke his halter, and hotly pursued by his groom blundered through the camp. As the groom's chief anxiety was to head it away from the

general's neighbourhood the stupid beast naturally made towards it, dashed into the open space in front of the general and stood snorting, the remnant of his halter dangling within reach of Barreto's hand. The general, seeing that Mongasi's men were as terrified by the strange beast as they had been at the cannon, was struck by a brilliant idea. Taking the camel by the halter he pretended to speak a few words to it, then told Temple to say that this camel, having an inordinate appetite, and being accustomed to eat human flesh, had come to protest against peace being made.

The spokesman of the deputation hurriedly promised that if the ferocious beast could be persuaded to content himself with beef an ample supply should be sent him. Having received an assurance that Barreto would do his best on this understanding to restrain the camel's appetite, the deputation saluted him with much hand-clapping and many extravagant compliments, saluted the camel with more hand-clapping accompanied by fervent prayers for mercy, and then, scraping their feet once more, withdrew.

That night Barreto called Temple to a private interview in his tent and asked him if he were willing to take his life in his hand and act as ambassador to Mongasi, promising that if he could win over Mongasi as an ally of the Portuguese he should receive, subject to the king's approval, any appointment that Barreto had to give.

"I ask for nothing but the hand of Dona Beatriz," replied Temple boldly.

"That you shall have if the lady be willing," replied the general, with a twinkle in his eye, "and there is no man under my command who deserves it more; but you need an appointment suitable to the lady's rank, and that you must go and earn. Prepare to start at dawn, for I am impatient to advance. Now farewell, senhor, and good luck be yours."

Temple saluted and withdrew, little thinking that never again on earth was he to see the man in whose hands his fortunes lay.

During the long idle days in which the Portuguese waited impatiently for Temple's return a foe, unseen and far more deadly than Mongasi's naked warriors, attacked their ranks. A natural physical and mental reaction set in. The constant excitement which for so many days had nerved them gave place to dejection now that its cause had vanished, and left them spiritless and miserable. Deadly lassitude overcame them since they no longer had need to be constantly alert and active. In a malarial climate great exertion and great excitement frequently prepare the way for fever, and these causes, added to the wounds from which fully a third of the men were suffering, created an epidemic of sickness from which few escaped. One man in every four was smitten with the mysterious disease that the Portuguese had attributed first to poison administered by Sena Arabs, and later to the sinister influence of evil spirits. Many more were attacked by dysentery. The stench from the rotting corpses that lay

unburied on the hillside poisoned the air. Gloom and dejection fell upon all. In addition to their other miseries it was announced that the food supplies were nearly exhausted, and that unless the reinforcements arrived within ten days the camp would be dependent on such food as could be got from Mongasi. Very fervently the soldiers hoped that Temple would succeed in arranging terms of peace.

At last one evening the camp was startled by a ringing cheer from the direction of the outposts. Every man who could walk hurried to the edge of the hill on which the village stood and stared into the valley. After two minutes of suspense a little group of men appeared far below. Five were natives, but the setting sun flashing on the steel helmet of the sixth proclaimed him Portuguese. Ten minutes later the newcomers were hailed with shouts. "Do you bring reinforcements?" "Where is your column?"

"Where is the general?" asked the Portuguese. "I carry a despatch."

A dozen hands pointed to Barreto, and all men loitered near hoping that he would condescend to make his news public, but as they watched him read a vague uneasiness spread through the crowd. "Bad news! Look at his face! He is pale as death!" they whispered to each other.

Suddenly Barreto crumpled the despatch in his hand. "Saddle my horse!" he cried. "Dom Vasco! Be so good as to come to my tent."

The crowd parted, wondering and silent, as the general and his adjutant strode through it.

“What has happened, senhor?” asked Dom Vasco Fernandez Homem when they reached the tent.

“Foul treachery,” replied Barreto. “Read for yourself.”

The adjutant took the despatch and read —

“To the Most Excellent and Most Illustrious Senhor Francisco Barreto, Captain-General and Conqueror of the Mines of Monomatapa and of the Kingdoms lying between Capo das Correntes and that of Guardafui, greeting from Joao da Silva, now lying at Mozambique in charge of stores for the conquest.”

“It happened that as we sailed by the land of Natal we sighted a vessel of his Majesty the King’s (whom may God preserve) bound from Mozambique to Lisbon, labouring sore, and like to founder after heavy storms. We took her crew aboard, the most precious part of her cargo, and a despatch for the King. I was minded to send one of my smaller vessels immediately back to Lisbon with this despatch, but decided to read it first, in order to learn whether its importance warranted this course. The despatch contained traitorous accusations against your Excellency, made by Antonio Pereira Brandao, the Captain of Mozambique, who declared it to be your purpose to renounce your allegiance to his Majesty, and make yourself sovereign of the mines. On arrival at Mozambique, I learned that all the stores and reinforcements intended for the conquest have been retained by the

Captain of Mozambique, he assigning as his reason his fear that your Excellency should use them against the King's Majesty. My orders are to proceed to Goa with all speed, but I have commanded my lieutenant, whom I entreat your Excellency to reward, if God should enable him to discharge his perilous commission, to find trusty guides and follow you with this present, that your Excellency may know what treasonable devices are wrought against you.

"I kiss your Excellency's hand. May God be pleased to bring you safe through the dangers that beset you. Your obedient servant to command in all that I say,
"Joao da Silva.

"To-day in the fortress of Mozambique. 14th August, 1572."

"What will you do?" asked Dom Vasco, as he handed back the letter.

"Ride day and night till I reach the base camp, then down the Zambesi by canoe, and on to Mozambique as swiftly as may be. You must bring the column back as quickly as you may to Sena. Bury the cannon. We will recover them on our return. Discard everything that will hinder you. Wait at Sena, and I will bring up the reinforcements with all the speed that God shall give me."

Barreto called for food, and crammed his wallet as full as it would hold. His horse was brought to the tent door and he swung himself into the saddle.

"One thing more," he said, as he gathered up the reins. "We cannot leave the Englishman to

perish. Send a strong guard of men to bring him back, lest the Kaffirs, hearing that we are retreating, should pluck up courage to kill him."

Then, with a dig of the spurs, the general tightened his reins and thundered down the hill alone.

Now, Dom Vasco was an excellent subordinate, but had none of the qualities that go to make a leader. Within the next few hours, though the adjutant still gave orders, the command of the column virtually passed into the hands of Monclaros. The Jesuit set about planning the retreat with vigour, for it was to that end he had plotted deeply and so treacherously. In one direction, however, he disobeyed Barreto's orders. It was an open secret that the Englishman would be appointed to the captaincy of Sena. Monclaros wanted that post — if not for Dom Vicente, at least for one of his own puppets. It would suit his plans, therefore, if the Englishman were to die; and if he died at the hands of the natives, so much the better. Next morning the savages who had been retained as hostages for Temple's safety were released, and told to return to their chief, taking with them a letter for the Englishman.

The letter, written by Monclaros, but signed with the general's name, ran as follows: —

"As soon as you shall have arranged terms of peace with Mongasi, take guides, proceed swiftly to Monomatapa and bid him yield himself to the King of Portugal. Demand that he should expel all Moors from his

dominions and admit Portuguese missionaries, punish the men who persuaded him to murder Father Dom Gonzalo, and cede all mines in his dominions to the King of Portugal."

"The heretic won't live long after he has carried out that order," said the priest to himself as the hostages left the camp.

CHAPTER XXII

AT MONOMATAPA'S COURT

BEFORE Temple reached the "great place" * of Mongasi, that chieftain had died.

Mongasi had been a man such as is common enough in African history. He had made himself a chief through sheer energy and ability. As a minor headman of Monomatapa he had plotted against his king, and when that plot was discovered had fled with his fellow conspirators. He had then established among the mountains in which the Ruenya River has its source a stronghold which soon became a place of refuge for malcontents and outlaws from all the neighbouring tribes. He drilled these men, and led them against the weakest of his neighbours, ruthlessly slaughtering adults of both sexes with the exception of such strong men as elected to join his ranks and such of the young women as seemed likely to bear sturdy sons. Year by year his power grew. Year by year his dominion spread

* In most parts of Bantu Africa the chief's village is called the "great place." Thus in the Zulu version of the Church of England Prayer-book the words "all the Royal Family" are translated by words that literally mean "all in the great dwelling-place."

as neighbouring tribes were annihilated or absorbed, until Monomatapa, fearing even for his own throne, made peace with the vigorous outlaw, and proclaimed him one of his vassals. Since that day Mongasi had raided only such tribes as did not recognize Monomatapa's sovereignty, but he and all his men looked forward with secret ambition to the day when they should have power to throw off their allegiance to the great despot, and stake all on one mighty effort to seize his throne.

His death left this ambitious band of warriors without a leader, for Mongasi having ruled by force rather than by right there was none to whom the chieftainship naturally descended. The sorcerers, fearing lest the death of the chief should disintegrate the tribe, as a temporary means of keeping it together declared that Mongasi would shortly return in a new shape, and so firmly did the common folk believe this that when they returned from burying their chief they fully expected to find him established in his new shape at his old quarters.

Now when Temple reached Mongasi's village he found not a man therein, for all had gone to the funeral. Knowing that nothing was to be gained by humility he ordered his escort to lead him to the chief's own hut. Here he seated himself naturally enough on the only stool in the place — the stool, as it happened, on which Mongasi had been wont to sit when he gave his orders to his people. Being hungry and thirsty, he then commanded the king's widows — such of them, at least, as had not an hour

before been taken to be buried alive in Mongasi's grave — to bring him food and drink.

All this happened by chance, but had far-reaching effects. When the headmen returned to the village they found, seated on the chief's stool and waited on by the king's widows, a representative of the mysterious race whose magical arts had proved so invincible, and a man, moreover, whose fiery hair and brick-red face suggested supernatural origin. So surprised was the first man who saw Temple thus usurping the dead chief's place that, scarce knowing what he did, he raised his hand and shouted the royal salute. Others echoed the cry, and as soon as it was known that the mysterious stranger could speak their language, imperfectly, but nevertheless fluently, the news flashed round the village that the dead chief, wearing the shape of one of the foreign magicians who had defeated him, had already returned from the grave.

When Temple found that for some reason, into which he thought it best not to inquire, he was unanimously recognized as a reincarnation of the dead chief, he resolved to make the situation serve the interests of his Portuguese masters, foreseeing that the credit he would gain by so doing would bring nearer the day when he might claim the hand of Dona Beatriz. His first despotic action was to order twenty head of oxen (he dare not demand more till he felt his new power more assured) to be sent to the Portuguese camp. His next work was to muster his new subjects, taking thought meanwhile

how to arrange for the passage of the Portuguese column through his territory. But before he had time to make his plans, the men whom Barreto had retained as hostages for Temple's safety returned to the "great place" bearing the treacherous letter from Monclaros.

Temple had been so spontaneously acknowledged as the earthly representative of their departed chief that none of Mongasi's men had had the wit to doubt it. The confidence of the most astute of the headmen, however, must have been considerably shaken when Temple showed such ignorance of Monomatapa as to announce that he was going in person, and accompanied only by a bodyguard suitable to his rank, to the court of that vindictive and powerful despot. Possibly they thought that his mind was still confused in consequence of his death and rapid reincarnation, or it may even be that they satisfied themselves with the thought that if he were not Mongasi he seemed likely to prove an admirable substitute. Whether their belief in him was shaken or not, with one voice they urged him to do nothing so foolhardy. In his previous life, they reminded him, he had taken good care never to place himself within the reach of Monomatapa's clutches. Whenever his liege lord had summoned him, he had always discovered some urgent work that the king's service demanded — such as the necessity of annihilating a distant village — to serve as an excuse for his non-appearance. The headmen reminded Temple that during the previous year he had

suffered from a serious illness which the witch doctors had diagnosed as due to magic worked by Monomatapa, a fact which clearly indicated that since the despot dared not attack his powerful vassal in fair fight, he did not scruple to seek his death by foul means. They assured him that if he gave the word his men, in spite of the shattering they had received at the hands of the Portuguese, would follow him in battle array, but they entreated him to consider the unlikelihood of his finding his way back to earth a third time, and not to venture except at the head of his warriors.

In spite of all protestations, Temple refused to be turned from his purpose. He realized how desperate was the task that he believed Barreto had assigned to him, and he knew that a reputation for utter fearlessness, backed by rumours of his supernatural origin — for rumour, he knew, would reach Monomatapa before him, however swiftly he travelled — would be worth more, in the coming ordeal, than a thousand armed savages at his back. He set out, therefore, and ten days later halted his bodyguard a mile to the north of the massive crumbling walls within which Monomatapa had his court, and sent forward a herald to announce his arrival.

When he had left the Portuguese camp, Temple had been entrusted with a dozen Indian cloths of gaudy coloured silk, a hundred yards of cotton cloth, a Toledo-forged sword, and a few inexpensive jewels as a peace-offering to Mongasi. That chief having

no further need of them, he had brought them on with him to present to Monomatapa. These he sent by men who accompanied his herald, with the message that they were a few worthless trifles which perhaps might serve to open the king's eyes "that he might see his vassal."

An anxious hour passed. Temple's bodyguard were ill at ease.* If any one of them had had the frankness to reveal his private thoughts, he would probably have said that he would like to be home in the security of his mountain stronghold, and that it was more pleasant to sweep with heart-lifting war-cry on to a defenceless village than to sit idle and helpless within easy reach of the pick of Monomatapa's army. At last a murmur ran round the ranks that the herald was returning.

"His carriers are laden with your presents, Tsitsilamoto,"* said the captain of the bodyguard. "The king has no eyes to see you."

"Then will I go at once to see him; better that I should go now than wait till he has time to devise evil against me."

The captain knelt, clasped Temple's feet, and entreated him not to go.

"Be not so foolhardy, my lord!" he cried. "What will your people do if they lose you again? They will be like the foolish guinea-fowl that run

* The name of an African chief must never be mentioned after his death. Mongasi's men, not knowing what was correct in the case of a reincarnated chief, had got out of the difficulty by addressing Temple by his native name, which they had learned from the camp-followers who had accompanied him to their village.

this way and that when they see the hunter. Monomatapa will eat up our villages and take our wives for his own soldiers. Without our lord to guide us we shall be undone. Think of the danger, my lord !”

“Did you ever know your chief show fear?” haughtily demanded Temple.

The captain might well have answered that he had often known the late Mongasi show an amount of discretion that might almost be called fear in his studied avoidance of the dread Monomatapa, but he saw that it was useless to argue with his old chief in his new form.

“Then will we come with you, Tsitsilamoto,” he replied; “better to die fighting by the side of our chief than be chased like buck across the mountains.”

“No. I go alone. Else will they kill me before I reach the king’s presence. Do you wait here till I send for you. If one comes bidding you come to the king, heed him not, but fly, unless he carries this in his hand.” Temple showed the embroidered tassel that hung from his sword hilt. “If the messenger shows this all is well; come without fear. If no one comes before the sun has set then may you think me dead. Fly to your homes and set all things in order for the battle, for I think that Monomatapa’s warriors will follow hard after you.”

He strode away up hill towards the “great place” and the members of his bodyguard, whose theological ideas were apt to get confused in times of trouble and difficulty, occupied themselves with sacrificing

an ox to the shade of the old Mongasi, that he might look down on and protect himself in his new form.

Monomatapa had chosen for his headquarters or "great place" a fortress built many generations before by the same mysterious people as built the ruins rumours of which gave rise to the Portuguese theory that the empire of Monomatapa was identical with the ancient realm of Ophir. A gigantic tor of naked granite, cleft on one side by some natural convulsion, stood up out of the plain. Its sides were absolutely precipitous and unclimbable so that access to the summit was possible only through the deep narrow rift. Only one man at a time could pass along this rift, and whoever did so was at the mercy of anybody standing on the rock-level fifty feet above, whence stones could be thrown on his head without fear of retaliation. On the level the centre of the hill-top could be reached only by means of a passage between broad-topped lofty walls, from which a mobile force of spearmen could hold at bay twenty times their number. No mediæval European fortress was more impregnable than this hill-top. In its centre, separated from other buildings by smaller stone walls, was the royal hut, opening on to an enclosure in which Monomatapa gave his subjects audience.

Not far from the spot where these men awaited the return of their chief there stands to-day a monument to the memory of a few Englishmen, the men of the Wilson patrol, who, more than three hundred years

later, were attacked there by the cream of Lobengula's army. It is recorded of these men — we have it on the testimony of those who slew them — that they lay down under cover of their dead horses and fought till they could fight no more, but that when their last cartridges were spent they threw away their useless rifles and stood up to die, and as they rose to their feet they laughed and sang. It was in such a mood that Temple strode on towards the Monomatapa's stronghold. Terror strikes only those who turn away from death. Those who meet him face to face are inspired, by the mercy of Him who gives death power, with a wild joy that has no comparison with milder emotions. Temple was about to stake his life in hope of the winning of the woman he loved, and since the prize was well worth the stake he went to make it with a light step and a lighter heart. As he breasted the hill he sang a jolly song that he and his fellow apprentices had often sung in Cheapside taverns.

“Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing acold ;
I stuff my skin
So full within,
Of jolly good ale and old.”

The sentry at the fortress entrance challenged him, but flinched aside as he pushed past. He had no heart to oppose one whose appearance and manner bore out his reputed supernatural origin — for rumour, as Temple had foreseen would be the case, had already reached Monomatapa's court; besides which

it was none of his business to spoil the king's sport by prematurely killing one of his victims.

Within the fortress Monomatapa was holding his court. Behind him and on either side stood, plumed and bedecked with barbaric splendour and armed with heavy spears, a bodyguard of stalwart men whose principal duty was to punctuate the royal utterances, whenever the king chose to speak, by murmuring, "‘*Kos*’ ! ‘*Kos*’ *ya*’ *makos*’ !" ("Chief! Chief of chiefs !") On the king's right sat four or five Arabs, men whose fearlessness, enterprise, and cunning had won for them lucrative positions as his unofficial advisers. On his left squatted a hundred men or more whose duty it was on important occasions to chant impromptu verses in praise of their royal master's strength, agility, military prowess, wisdom and benevolence, and on ordinary occasions to tickle his vanity whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself, by crying out "Hail to the lord of the sun and the moon, the king of all land and rivers, who eats up his enemies as locusts eat grass. Hail to the great chief, the great wizard, the great lion !" In response to which all present would murmur, "Hail to our Lord," after which the business of the hour would be resumed. Whenever the king sneezed or yawned each man present vigorously clapped his hands, and a herald at the courtyard entrance shouted to all within hearing to do likewise. Whoever had the misfortune to have business with the king lay down before coming in sight of the monarch and wriggled

towards the throne. While saying what he had to say he lay on his side before the throne and clapped his hands together at every fourth word he uttered. A satirist who wished to ridicule the pomp of kings could hardly imagine anything more ridiculous, for the king was not such a man as inspires involuntary respect. He was grossly corpulent. The soft fat on his thighs, calves and arms quivered with every movement. His eyes were dull, bloodshot, and half-closed. Saliva dripped from his open mouth and protruding lips. Probably nobody with a more offensively contemptible personality has ever ruled a deluded people. But there was a grim side to all this absurdity. In and out among the throng crawled on all fours a number of men who were known as "the king's hyænas." From time to time one of these men would lift his head and howl, "*Nyama, nyama*" (meat, meat), and all his fellows would respond, "Give us meat, my lord." These ghoulish brutes kept their eyes fixed on a gold-tipped spear which the king held in his hand, for if he dropped it, it was a signal that they were to pounce on, kill and eat whatever miserable wretch lay grovelling at the king's feet.

The cries of the king's hyænas were loud and persistent, for all knew that a mysterious stranger who claimed to be the dead Mongasi reincarnated had sought and been refused an audience. Suddenly above the noise rose the sound of a human voice singing in an unknown tongue —

“No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if it would,
I am so wrapt, and thoroughly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.”

All wondered. Monomatapa trembled, for he believed the song to be the incantation of a wizard more powerful than himself who came to work him ill. He had none of the brute courage and administrative genius that had enabled his ancestors first to win a throne and then to build up the mightiest empire in the history of savage Africa. Sloth, hemp-smoking, unbridled lust, and the exercise of unrestrained cruelty had so sapped his nerve and energy that no power on earth could have kept him on the throne if his subjects had not firmly believed him to be the semi-divine successor of a long line of demi-gods.

Monomatapa knew that only this belief kept him on his throne. He knew, too, that this belief would vanish if a secret, which he trembled to remember he shared with others, once became public. It was an unalterable law that as soon as the slightest physical infirmity became apparent in the reigning monarch, he must abdicate his throne and die by his own hand, for his divinity had passed from him. Each one of Monomatapa's predecessors had faced the great Unknown voluntarily and with dignity; but he himself, though he knew his time had come to follow his ancestors, clung ignobly to life and power. In the desperate hope of being given a charm that would cure his malady, he had revealed his secret to the Arabs. Ever since he had

done so his life had been in their hands. He had had to obey their will. He had lived in terror lest they should reveal his secret, and had awaited with dread the inevitable moment when the man, whoever it might be, to whom his divinity had passed should come and hurl him from his throne.

When he heard that a vassal whom he had long dreaded had died and immediately come to life again, he feared for his throne. When this same man, accompanied by only a small bodyguard, had boldly demanded an interview his fears were redoubled. When he heard the sound of what he believed to be an incantation in an unknown tongue, he trembled as if with ague, and he could scarcely suppress a wail of terror when there entered into his presence, unbidden, unannounced and upright, a clothed man whose hair was the colour of fire, whose face was the colour of the sun when it sets behind a dust haze, and who sang —

“Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold ;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough
Whether it be new or old.”

As Temple came in sight the “king’s hyænas” and court praisers became dumb with amazement. The men of the bodyguard gripped their spears more firmly. Even the petitioner who grovelled at Monomatapa’s feet, realizing that something unusual was happening, stopped speaking and wriggled his head round to see. If a negro from Kamerun walked unannounced into the presence of the

Emperor of Germany, and saluted him as "Willy!" not one tenth as much amazement would be felt by those who heard him as was felt by Monomatapa and his court at Temple's coolness. All expected that even if Monomatapa did not immediately punish such monstrous insolence, Heaven itself would strike dead the sacrilegious intruder who approached the demi-god king without grovelling on the ground.

The Englishman advanced with confident stride and paused a moment to look at the monarch who sat before him. Then he raised his hat and said, "Greeting, Monomatapa."

A gasp of horror was uttered on every side, and then the general indignation found vent. Regardless of discipline the members of the bodyguard waved their spears and shouted, "Kill, my lord, kill." The court praisers rose to their feet and echoed the shout, and the staccato cries of the "king's hyænas" rose to a hoarse roar.

Monomatapa stared at the intruder as if he were fascinated. His breath came in quick laborious pants. His bloated dusky face turned to a sickly ash-grey colour. He trembled until every fold of his gross flesh quivered. Then either by accident or by design his gold-tipped spear fell with a clatter to the ground.

At the accustomed signal the "king's hyænas" leapt to their feet, but Temple was quicker than they. With one mighty bound he reached the throne, then whirling his sword high above the

king's head he cried, "Halt, every man, or your king dies!"

The court praisers cowered to the ground in panic, the "hyænas" stood stock still, the warriors clamoured for orders, but all looked to their king to see what he would do. Then the mighty Monomatapa, the man whose lightest word was law for many thousand square miles, sank into an ungainly heap on to the ground, stretched out trembling hands till they clasped Temple's feet, and in piteous accents whined for mercy.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DOWNFALL OF ANTONIO PEREIRA BRANDAO

A WHOLE book might well be written about the hardships that befell Francisco Barreto on his long, lonely journey from the scene of his dearly-won victory over Mongasi to the fortress of Mozambique. Three days after starting he spurred a dying horse into the base camp on the Zambesi bank. Of the men who had been left or sent there, fifty had died, but the rest were rapidly gaining strength. Barreto ate a hearty meal, and gave orders to Ruy de Mello to send all the assistance he could to the retreating column. An hour later, having collected a double crew in order that he might travel day and night, he embarked on a canoe and started on the long river journey for the coast. As soon as the canoe left the camp he lay down to sleep among the paddlers' feet, and slept without waking for twenty-four hours on end.

Midway between the base camp and Sena, among the foaming currents that fret and swirl in the dreaded Lupata Gorge, his canoemen lost their heads. The canoe spun round, and then flung itself headlong against the water-worn sides of a

giant boulder. Barreto gripped the gunwale with both hands, slid into the water, and lost consciousness as he and the fragment of canoe to which he clung sank under the roaring stream. An hour later he woke to find himself lying on the river bank below the gorge, alone, battered, and bruised, but safe. A week later, accompanied by a single native guide, he limped into the fort at Sena.

Here again he paused only long enough to despatch what men and provisions the fort could spare for the relief of the starving column before embarking again in another canoe. He left it at the head of the river delta thirty miles below, and proceeded on foot across country to the port of Quelimane. Here he embarked on a small pangaia, and one Sunday morning, after beating for ten days in the teeth of a strong head wind, landed at last at Mozambique.

Antonio Brandao, the captain of the fortress, was on his way to church with his staff when the pangaia dropped anchor, and the arrival of a small coasting vessel not being a matter of importance the occurrence was not reported. It was a feast day, and the church was filled, not only with the permanent inhabitants of the fortress, both Portuguese and slaves, but also with the men who had been sent to reinforce Barreto's column, and who for several months had been waiting for Brandao to order them to advance. A bull fight that had been arranged for that afternoon gave all present a topic to chatter about while the priest droned



“His eyes were full of tears, as if it had been he who was the culprit.”

the Mass, so that none noticed when a gaunt and ragged man quietly entered the church.

When the last *Dominus vobiscum* had been intoned, all surged towards the church door, but stopped and stood still in amazement on seeing the stranger come forward and lay his hand on Brandao's arm.

"A word with you in private, senhor," he said. "Let us wait here till the church is empty."

The rest of the congregation moved on and, realizing that something of interest was about to happen, lingered outside near the church door. A whisper passed round that the tattered stranger was none other than Francisco Barreto, the governor, mysteriously returned from the interior. One man peeped in at the door and reported that Captain Brandao was sobbing on his knees before the stranger. Excitement in the group at the door became intense. Presently Barreto's voice rang out —

"Have done, senhor. Is it not enough that you have played the traitor, that you must make your villainy worse by accusing valiant and honest gentlemen who are not here to answer you? Go, coward, dog and traitor. Were this not a church and you an old man I would kick you from me."

A moment later Brandao came out. As he walked he reeled as if he were drunk. Without looking to right or left, he staggered through the throng, across the sunlit churchyard, and away out of sight. Then the stranger came out. One who left a record of that moment declares that "his eyes were full of tears, as if it had been he who was the

culprit. He was so fatigued that he seemed as if he had been engaged in some laborious task." He looked round the throng and said —

"Gentlemen, I am Francisco Barreto, your Governor. A ruined man, I think, but still your Governor. I ask the hospitality of one of you, for I am hungry and very tired."

The man in command of the reinforcements stepped forward, introduced himself, and led Barreto away to his quarters. They ate the midday meal together in silence, the Governor staring at nothing in moody abstraction, and seeming not to notice what was before him. At length he drew from his wallet a dirty tattered letter and handed it to his host.

"Read this, senhor," he said. "It was this that brought me back to Mozambique when success seemed within my reach."

The captain of the reinforcements read the letter and handed it back.

"Now I know why we have been kept so many months in idleness," he said. "When we asked why we did not go forward, Senhor Brandao said we must await your orders whether to advance by way of Sofala or by the River of Good Indications. Do we advance now?"

"With as little delay as may be. How long will it take to transship your cargo into light vessels?"

"The pangaias are scattered all along the coast. Senhor Brandao sent them to get provisions. It will take two months and more to collect them."

“Two months! And my gallant men at Sena dying of starvation every day. Would God I had died before I led them to their deaths! To-morrow buy wine and such food as sick men can eat to the extent of a thousand cruzados — it is all I have left in the world — it may save a life or two when we rejoin the column. For the present give orders that every man in Mozambique shall work from this hour onward at loading such light ships as are in port. Go, now, and set them to it.”

The captain rose to go.

“And Senhor Brandao? You will have him arrested?”

“What use! Can I bring the dead back to life by putting him in prison? I have discharged him from the king’s service, so he must needs beg his bread for the few years that God shall spare him, but for the rest God shall be his judge — not I.”

The great ocean-going ships that had brought the reinforcements from Lisbon were too deep in draught and too unwieldy to navigate the Luabo mouth of the Zambesi, through which the relief column must needs go. A fleet of light vessels suitable for navigating both sea and river had therefore to be collected from all along the coast, from Quelimane to Zanzibar, and loaded with the stores that had come with the reinforcements. Before this was done the south-west monsoon had broken, so that when at last Barreto was able to signal an order to weigh anchor, a gale was howling in their teeth.

The pilots and master-mariners unanimously

protested that it was madness to start before the monsoon had blown itself out, and it was not until Barreto threatened to hang half a dozen of them that his signal was obeyed. He saved little time by disregarding their protests. Four days after sailing the little fleet, battered and scattered, struggled back again to Mozambique to refit. Again it put to sea in the teeth of a freshening gale, and partly by luck, partly by desperate seamanship, managed to beat as far as Parapato. A short spell of fine weather enabled it to creep round the coast from there to Quelimane, but at this point it seemed impossible to go farther until the season changed. Three times it faced the sea and beat for days among the whirling currents and uncharted sandbanks that lie off the Zambesi's many mouths. Three times it turned and ran back for shelter. At last Barreto in despair disembarked a small flying column to march overland to Sena, and placing himself at its head, left the fleet to come on by way of the Luabo as soon as it could.

He had left Mozambique on the 3rd of March. On the 7th of May his flying column reached Mazarro, a native village some ninety miles below Sena, and the mighty league-wide river, full to the brim of its precipitous banks, lay before them. Here only one canoe was to be had, for the people had taken the rest of their fleet to work amongst the lagoons that the Zambesi annually fills. In this canoe, with a reluctantly pressed crew of sturdy paddlers and with only one Portuguese companion,

a trumpeter, Barreto embarked, leaving the flying column to march along the river bank. At sunrise on the morning of the 14th of May, after driving his men hard all night, he saw the newly built fortress and church of Sena.

"There are two flags on the fort, your Excellency," said the trumpeter, straining his aching eyes across the gleaming water.

"Then Dom Vasco is here with such of my men as God has spared. Blow a call, trumpeter. It will be the gladdest sound they have heard for many weary days."

No answering note came back over the water, but as they neared the shore Barreto could see men in ones and twos straggling down to the water's edge. He shouted a greeting, and a faint cheer came back to him. Then the men on shore formed in a double line to welcome their returning general with a guard of honour. Barreto counted them. There were barely fifty. Between the ranks Dom Vasco Fernandez Homem sat on a starving horse, but he clung to the mane as if he could scarcely hold himself upright.

"For the love of Heaven tell me, Dom Vasco, where are the rest of my men?" cried Barreto, as the canoe's nose touched the sand.

"Dying or dead. Everything is at an end," replied the adjutant; and when he had said these words, writes the chronicler, "A severe fit seized him and he fell from his horse, so that we took him up for dead."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DEATH OF BARRETO

FROM the moment that Barreto had left the column and raced to Mozambique in order to save his men as far as might be from the result of Brandao's treachery, the constant need for action had kept him from brooding much over the ruin of his expedition. Now the full extent of that ruin was suddenly brought home to him. As he walked through the camp and the fortress, accompanied by such few surviving officers as were able to walk, men looked up from the piles of rags on which they lay and feebly cried for food. Some were strong enough to raise a feeble hand to the salute, some were so near their end that they did not notice him, but stared straight in front of them with wide-opened lustreless unseeing eyes. In one corner lay the apothecary-surgeon of the column, worn out with fighting diseases he did not understand and starvation for which he had no remedy. As Barreto passed he propped himself on his arm and saluted. "I have done what I could, general," he said, and fell back exhausted.

They reached the straw-walled hut, already falling into ruins, which Barreto had formerly occupied

after relinquishing his house to Dona Beatriz. Here the general dismissed all save the senior officer present, of whom he asked an account of what had befallen the column after he had left it. There was little to tell. For three weeks after they had begun to retreat they had meat enough, thanks to the oxen which Temple had sent from Mongasi's "great place," but an almost exclusively meat diet had brought upon them dysentery and scurvy. Every day there had been more sick men to carry and fewer men to carry them. Then relief had arrived from the base camp, but before they reached the Zambesi twenty men had died. Here they abandoned their waggons, and packing their two hundred sick into such canoes as they could find, had turned eastwards downstream. The time of year in which the retreat had taken place was that which the natives call the "season of hunger," for the stores gathered at the last harvest were almost exhausted, and the early rains had not yet produced the earliest of the new crops.

Before starting to retreat, Dom Vasco, with the object of husbanding the stores, had disbanded and dismissed the native camp-followers, and these men had gone ahead of the column, buying up or stealing whatever reserve stocks of food were to be found in the native villages along the river banks, so that the Portuguese following after them found the country as bare of food as if a flock of giant locusts had preceded them. The hope of finding food in abundance at Sena had cheered them on, but on reaching the settlement they found these men almost

as poverty-stricken as themselves. The massacre of the Arabs had killed the Sena trade. Caravans had found a new route to the coast that lay far to the northward beyond reach of the garrison. The native plantations had been abandoned, and had these not contained foodstuffs which had come to bearing in spite of neglect, it would have been necessary for the whole settlement to leave the township and retreat to Quelimane.

"The reinforcements will be here, God willing, in a week," said Barreto, wearily, when the speaker had finished. "Meanwhile there is food, wheaten flour and wine, in my canoe. Get it and distribute it among the sick. Where is the lady Dona Beatriz?"

"At work among the sick," replied the officer. "There is little she can do, but the men love her. The reverend gentlemen, Father Monclaros and Father Sebastian, are too busy burying the dead and confessing the dying to have much time to spare with those whose need is less urgent."

"And that gallant Englishman whom I promised should marry her?"

"Dead, we suppose, senhor. He never came back from his embassy to the chief, Mongasi."

"Poor girl, poor girl. Would to God she had stayed in her convent in Goa!" replied Barreto. "Ask her to condescend to come to me, and then distribute the food of which I told you."

The fidalgo departed on his errand and Barreto sat still, his head in his hand, staring moodily into

vacancy. Presently a light step recalled him to himself. Dona Beatriz, sallow and haggard with privation, but still bright-eyed and vigorous, entered the hut. The general rose, bowed low, and kissed her hand.

"I ventured to ask you to come to me that I might ask your pardon," he said, when conventional greetings had been exchanged.

"Pardon for what, your Excellency?" the girl replied.

"For leaving you in this dreadful place. What amends are in my power I will make. In a few days the reinforcements will be here. When the pangaias which bring them return to Mozambique, you shall return with them and take ship for Lisbon. I will give you a letter to the king entreating his favour. If his Majesty is not pleased to show you favour, there is still my sister, who will be good to you for my sake. At the worst there are convents where you may find peace and a home a thousand times more comfortable than this dreary, famine-stricken fortress."

"Your Excellency forgets your promise. My husband is to be Captain of Sena, and my home is here with him."

"Sena is ruined, the captaincy of Sena is worthless, and your lover, I am told, is dead. Have courage to face the truth, dear lady."

"They say he is dead. I have been persecuted with the wooing of men who swear that he is dead and are willing to wed me on the chance of your

Excellency making some provision for me. I will not believe him dead. He brought me through so many dangers ; shall I doubt that he will come back to me in spite of whatever dangers now beset him ? If he is dead, then will I wait here where we plighted our troth before God, where every tree and stone speaks to me of his dear memory, till it shall please God to reunite us."

As Dona Beatriz was speaking she was interrupted by Monclaros, who suddenly without asking permission and without apology, strode into the hut.

"So you have come to see how many are left of those whom you abandoned in the wilderness," shouted the priest. "Where are the reinforcements you pretended you would bring ? Four weary months we have waited here, burying our dead day by day while you took your ease at Mozambique. Traitor and murderer, come out and see the misery caused by your ambition ! While we were advancing into this barren and cursed country did I not urge you again and again to abandon your mad quest and save the lives of those whom the king had entrusted to you ? You, blinded by lust of gold and power, would not listen. Now more than three-quarters of these men have gone before the Throne of God to bear witness against you. You would not listen to me before, but you shall listen to me now. Abandon this mad crusade while there are still left some lives to save. Has not God shown clearly enough that He will not give it His blessing ? Lead us back to Mozambique while we are still alive. You are

answerable to God and to the king for the lives of those who have died in serving you. Lead us back to Mozambique or as God shall save me —— ”

At first the general had listened to the priest's tirade with weary apathy, but its wild injustice stung him at last to reply. He sprang to his feet so fiercely that Monclaros, brave man though he was, slunk back and became silent.

“Enough of this,” cried Barreto. “I am answerable, as you say, to God and my king — not to you. What I have done I have done under the king's orders, and to him will I answer it. All the harm that has befallen this ill-fated expedition has arisen from my listening to your ill-omened advice. Let me hear one other word from you and neither your priesthood nor the fact that you are the king's favourite shall save your life. Go !”

Monclaros slunk away, cowed but not beaten, to find Dom Vicente and devise plans for raising a general revolt against the general if he should order an advance when the reinforcements arrived. Barreto, left to himself — Dona Beatriz had slipped out of the hut when Monclaros had burst into it — sank back into the moody abstraction in which the girl had found him. He felt utterly weary and utterly miserable. For a long year he had fought with heroic courage against terrible odds. At last a time had come when there was nothing for him to do but to wait, and his magnificent energy, lacking the stimulus that the need for constant action had given it, at last began to fail.

For the first time since he had landed in Africa the influence of the climate had power over him. His mental lassitude prepared the way for physical weakness. Cold shivers ran down his spine. His head ached. His limbs felt lifeless. Presently, chilled to the bone, he carried his chair into the sunshine, but the sight of gaunt and starving men sitting and lying in idle groups gave additional bitterness to his misery, and very soon he returned to the hut and sank listlessly on to the bed. Later he arose, and unlocked a chest that since he had left Sena a year before had stood in a corner of a hut. He lifted out a bundle of papers, and tried to sort them, but his mind refused the task. He found himself reading and re-reading documents with as little comprehension as if they had been written in an unknown tongue. He tried to cast his accounts, but the figures swam mistily before his eyes, and he gave up the task in despair. At sundown he sent for Father Sebastian, announced his intention of taking the sacrament on the following day, and asked to be confessed.

Next morning he had scarcely strength to dress himself, and would not have been able to reach the church had not his trumpeter supported him. After Mass Dom Vasco Homem — himself scarcely able to stand — and other officers, accompanied him to his hut and urged him to eat, but he dismissed them peevishly and laid himself down again. Late that night Monclaros heard a rumour that the general was dying. The Jesuit's first

thought was one of delight that fate should thus further his deep-laid evil schemes. His next was that it behoved him to hear the dying man's confession on the chance of making capital out of whatever he might reveal, but when he reached the ramshackle hut in which lay the man he had wronged so foully, the ignoble thoughts of the schemer were, for the moment, driven out by the half-forgotten instincts of the gentleman.

The dim light of a smoky evil-smelling candle showed Francisco Barreto lying on an unclean straw mattress, and shivering under a heap of tattered garments. The rickety table was littered with untouched food. In one corner lay the soldier's helmet and breastplate. His sword hung against the thatch of the wall. The ravages of white ants were to be seen in an intricate network of little grooves in the wood of pillar and rafter. Tufts of rotting thatch hung from the roof in frowsy clusters. Rats scampered among unclean insects across the rough earthen floor. Mosquitoes filled the air with the thin droning of their restless wings. A musty smell of mildew and decay accentuated the general misery of the hovel in which the general lay dying.

The Jesuit felt the dying man's pulse, laid a hand on his forehead to estimate his temperature, and in a kinder voice than he had used to any man for many years asked him how he felt.

"His Excellency has been unconscious for hours," said a voice from the shadow. Monclaros was startled. In the dim light he had not seen that

Father Sebastian was kneeling at the foot of the bed.

"So you are here! I thought he was alone," he replied. "Come, let us see what we can do to revive him."

The Jesuit, among many other accomplishments, knew almost as much of human ailments as was known in his day. Under his directions Father Sebastian heated towels at the fire of one of the garrison cooks and applied them to the general's chest and stomach. Then patiently, unweariedly they rubbed his lifeless limbs until at last, after more than an hour's exertion, they saw him open his eyes and look around him.

At first he looked perplexed, as if he did not realize where he was, but when his senses had cleared he stretched a trembling hand towards Monclaros.

"I see you are returning good for evil, Father," he said feebly. "We quarrelled yesterday. You must forgive me if I abused you. No doubt your words were those of a loyal subject of the king who could not see eye to eye with me."

His voice fell away to a whisper, and his eyes closed.

Monclaros grasped the dying man's hand in silence.

A few moments later Barreto spoke again. "Do not put up my things to auction. I do not wish the soldiers to mock at my tattered breeches, and the king would feel his honour slighted if it became

known that the Governor-General of East Africa died with less than a cruzado's worth of property."

He sank back on his pillows.

"He will not recover consciousness again," whispered Monclaros to the Dominican. "I must administer the last rites while there is still time. Fetch me the holy oil."

Half an hour later Barreto turned slightly, tried to lift his hands, muttered something that neither man could hear, and then lay still. So died a man as loyal, as unselfish, as brave as any of the many heroes who gave lustre to the Portuguese nation. For a while the Jesuit joined the Dominican in prayer for the welfare of the dead man's soul, and who shall say, liar and traitor though he was, that his prayers were not sincere? Presently he rose to his feet and opened the chest that stood in a corner of the hut.

"Come, let us see what money he has left," he said, "that we may spend it in Masses for his soul's salvation."

"You will find none there, for I asked him when I heard his confession," answered Father Sebastian. "The whole of his salary he spent last year for the sake of the king's honour in paying part of the arrears of the soldiers' wages. What little he had left he spent at Mozambique to buy food and wine for the sick. But his soul shall not suffer for lack of Masses. I myself will say them."

"As you will," grunted the Jesuit, with disgust. "At any rate, as the king graciously appointed me

to be Francisco Barreto's adviser, it is my duty to see what papers he has left."

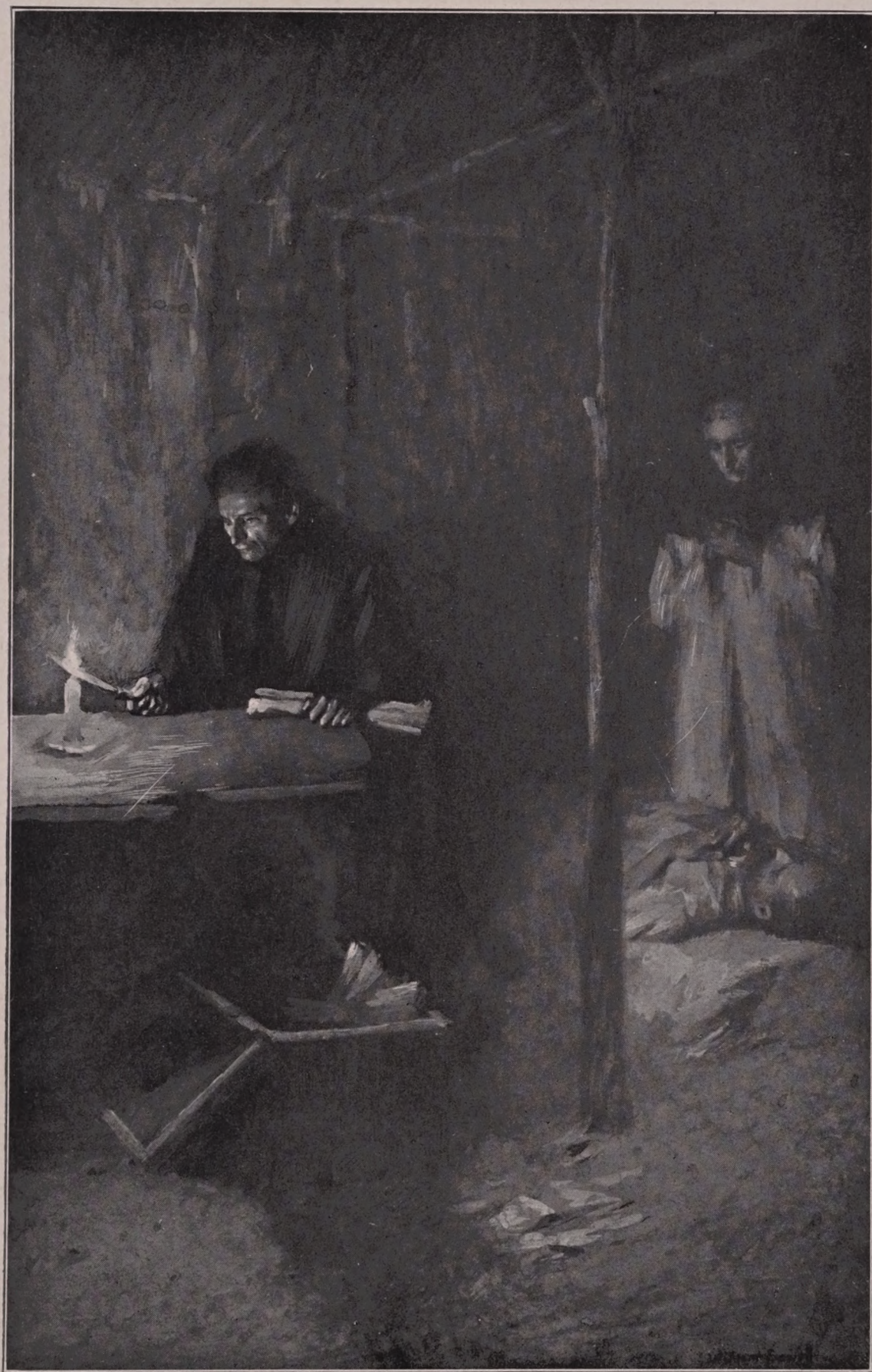
Father Sebastian resumed his prayers at the dead man's bedside, and for an hour and more Monclaros searched amongst the papers that lay in untidy confusion in Barreto's chest. In those days every Portuguese official appointed to a high command carried wherever he went a sealed packet within which was written the name of whomever the king had chosen to succeed him. It was for this packet that Monclaros was searching. When he found it he glanced cautiously at his companion. The friar's grey head was bowed in prayer. Silently the Jesuit changed his position so that his back was turned to the Dominican. Then he heated the blade of his knife in the candle flame and deftly inserted it under the seal of the packet, in such a way that the seal was lifted unbroken from the parchment. Swiftly he found the name within, and as swiftly returned the unbroken seal to its original place.

Dawn was breaking when Monclaros left the hut. Before going to his own quarters he roused Dom Vicente and told him that the general was dead.

"Have you got the succession papers?" asked the fidalgo, eagerly.

"I looked at them, and left them as I found them," answered the priest. "Dom Vasco Ferdinando Homem is to succeed."

"Dom Vasco! And you did not destroy the paper! Who would have known if you had put my name in his place? The king would as likely



“He heated the blade of his knife in the candle flame.”

as not forget whom he had chosen. Did you not promise me ——”

“Patience, my son, patience. If you became governor, on you would fall the brunt of the king’s anger when he learns of the failure of the expedition. When you are as old as I am, you will know that it is better to sit behind a throne than on it.”

CHAPTER XXV

IN WHICH TEMPLE RETURNS TO SENA

THE first part of the relief column, that which had marched overland from Mazarro, arrived just in time to witness Francisco Barreto's funeral.

The new-comers, accustomed to hate men of rank in proportion to the power these held, were utterly unable to understand the grief at their leader's death shown by those who had served under him. When the blare of trumpets announced the moment when the corpse was to be carried to the grave, men who could scarcely stand dragged themselves to the little church. The heavy labour of carrying the coffin had been assigned to arquebusiers drawn from the relief forces, but at the last moment a dozen of the strongest members of the original column claimed the privilege. The carrying out of the ceremonies, the pomp and circumstance usual to the funeral of a general, fell to the men of the relief column, but the homage of grief was paid by the men he had led through so many and so great hardships.

There was one man of the original column, however, who paid scant homage to the memory of the dead. When the pompous funeral service was over,

Monclaros, as the senior priest present, held up his hand and called on all to listen. He told the story of the ill-fated expedition, dwelling on its hardships and dangers, and insinuating that but for mismanagement it need never have failed. Then growing bolder as the force of his words gained the attention of his hearers, he declared that as the general's adviser appointed by the king himself he had again and again urged Barreto to abandon the quest, but that blinded by lust for glory he had refused to listen. "Men of the original command, I call you to witness," he concluded, "that every mile from here to the place where we turned back is marked with the grave of a gallant Portuguese soldier. Men of the relief column! Underneath your feet lie buried fellow soldiers whose death was caused by the ambition of a single man. Look round at the pale and haggard faces of those few who are left. They, too, would have died very soon if you had not come to their relief. Let this be a warning to all who seek for earthly glory, and who sacrifice God-given lives to serve their own ambitions."

He ceased, and a murmur of approval ran round the members of the relief column, and even those who had served under and loved the dead man began to feel that they had a grievance against him. Suddenly another voice called for silence. Father Sebastian stood forward, and those who knew him noticed that his usually kindly face was red with anger.

"Hear another word, my children," he cried.

“He who lies dead below my feet was charged by his Majesty to carry the true religion into this heathen land and to avenge the death of Dom Gonzalo, the saintly martyr. Was not that a task worthy of any true Christian’s ambition? He beggared himself to pay your wages, and spent his last cruzado to buy food and wine for the sick. Could any man do more? There are two things that a successful man can leave behind him — wealth, or a good name. Only a man’s heirs can enjoy the wealth he leaves, and it is soon abused and scattered, but a good name is eternal. None can destroy it. Your general died as poor in this world’s goods as when he was born, but he has left behind him a name that will be honoured as long as the Portuguese nation endures.”

“You did not share the toil and danger of the march, Father Sebastian,” sneered Monclaros, but the Dominican, unaccustomed to bandy words and already half-ashamed of his chivalrous anger, answered nothing, but left the church with bowed head and streaming eyes. Though his words checked the tendency to befoul Barreto’s honour, those of the Jesuit had their designed effect. As the fidalgoes passed from the church to a council meeting that had been called in order that all might know who had succeeded to the governorship, there were few but agreed that the conquest of Monomatapa was too difficult an enterprise, and should be abandoned without delay. Most of those few officers who had survived the hardships of the first expedition

were too worn and too heartsick to wish to renew it, and those of the relief column, after hearing the Jesuit's words, had little desire to embark further on what seemed a wild and absolutely unprofitable crusade.

Dom Vasco, announcing that he was Barreto's successor, at once took his seat as president of the council, and asked each fidalgo in turn whether he advised advance or retreat. Some counselled the revival of the project to advance against Monomatapa by way of Sofala. Some suggested waiting at Sena until the king's pleasure should be known. Only five fidalgoes, and each of these had served with the first expedition, contended that they should turn their knowledge of the Zambesi route and their victory over Mongasi to advantage and advance again over the same ground as before.

The new general was perplexed and troubled. He was as loyal and energetic a subordinate as any man could wish, but was ill-fitted for the responsibilities of command. His own choice would have been to go forward and carry out the letter of the king's instructions or die in the attempt, but he shirked the responsibility of ignoring the majority of his officers and especially of disregarding the advice of the priest. Dismissing the council without giving a decision, he walked moodily up and down the beaten track between the fortress and the river beach.

"Shall I go on?" he pondered. "We know the road for a hundred leagues before us, and Mongasi dare not attack us again. Shall I try the

Sofala route, at the risk of meeting new and unknown dangers? Shall I keep the force in idleness till the king sends a command for me to give place to a more resolute man? All the great achievements of the past century have been won by boldness. The Genoese seaman held on westwards in spite of his men, and found a new world. Bartholomew Dias allowed his officers to turn him back and left to da Gama the immortal honour of discovering a sea road to India."

As he paced to and fro he suddenly met Dona Beatriz, who, accompanied by her negress attendant, was distributing among the sick the delicacies that Barreto had brought from Mozambique. The meeting gave a new turn to his thoughts.

"How fares the most illustrious Dona Beatriz?" he inquired, lifting his hat and bowing.

"Very well able to serve your Excellency," replied the lady. She liked Homem, but her acquaintance with him was not intimate enough to admit of a less formal reply to his greeting.

"Grant me a few moments of your esteemed company," continued Dom Vasco, turning to walk with her. "It may be necessary to withdraw the troops to Mozambique, leaving only a few men to garrison the fort. What would the senhorita wish to do in that case?"

"Your Excellency need have no care for me," replied Dona Beatriz. "The Englishman, Senhor John Temple, is coming back soon. Your Excellency will remember that I am betrothed to him and

that Senhor Francisco Barreto — may glory be his portion — promised that the captaincy of Sena should be given to whomever I should wed."

"The Englishman! Dear lady, he is dead."

"He is not dead," replied Dona Beatriz. "Two day ago my attendant told me that the slaves had heard news of him from their fellow countrymen. He is on his way hither from Monomatapa's land. Is it not so, Luiza? Is not the man whom the Kaffirs call Tsitsilamoto on his way hither?"

Luiza, Dona Beatriz's servant, grinned.

"Last night he slept at a village a long day's walk from here," she answered. "He will be here soon."

"Misery has turned her brain and her woman is humouring her sick fancies," thought Dom Vasco.

"But if he comes not, Dona Beatriz?" he asked.

"So sure am I that he will come to-day that I would go and meet him if I knew the road," she answered with a glad smile.

Luiza turned a stolid face towards the west.

"He is coming now. I hear him," she said. "He is coming by canoe."

Dona Beatriz turned eagerly and strained her eyes to scan the broad surface of the river that gleamed golden with the setting sun. There was nothing to be seen by European eyes or heard by European ears.

"Come up to the ramparts," she cried impatiently. "We can see better from there."

Dom Vasco was too courteous to refuse, but he would gladly have shirked witnessing her distress when her wild hopes met with the disappointment that seemed inevitable. Reluctantly he followed her to the highest part of the fort, and from there undoubtedly they could see a black speck far away on the water. As they watched, the speck came nearer and grew larger. Then a faint droning noise reached their ears. By the time the speck had grown to the shape of a canoe the noise had grown until both watchers recognized it as one of those barbaric exhilarating chants that Zambesi boatmen sing when they are paddling at their utmost speed.

The sentries down below, hearing the sound, shouted an alarm. A bugle blew. Men ran out of the tents and the fortress trailing pikes and buckling on swords.

"Go down, oh, go down," cried Dona Beatriz eagerly. "They think the Kaffirs are coming to attack the fort. They may shoot him before they learn who he is. Oh, be quick. And, senhor, tell him to come at once to my house."

Dona Beatriz almost pushed the bewildered general down the rampart steps, and ran to her own quarters. Then she stood still and waited.

The long lazy minutes dragged by. She heard shouts; then cheers; then a long silence intervened.

"They are questioning him," she said to herself.

"It is natural that they should want to question him."

Ten more weary minutes passed. Dona Beatriz opened the door, hesitated, stepped out, hesitated again, came back, and slowly closed the door again.

"He will be here soon," she assured herself. "He will surely come soon."

At last there was a quick step on the verandah outside. She flung open the door and held out her arms.

An hour later the reunited lovers were seated hand in hand in Dona Beatriz's room. Temple was in the middle of a rapid summary of his adventures.

"When their fat old king, Monomatapa, had done patting my feet, I lifted him and told him not to be afraid. I seated myself on his own throne, and told him he could sit where he would. Then we dismissed his court and sent for my own men. They came bringing the presents I had brought him. Later in the day he summoned all his chief men, and told them that I was a god from the other world who had come to share his throne, or some such nonsense, and proclaimed that he had appointed me to be his chief wife.* At this I laughed till I

* The above is not a printer's error. Presumably, considering that to be his wife was the highest honour that any human being could enjoy, Monomatapa was accustomed to proclaim as his "wife" any one whom he specially wished to honour. When, years afterwards, diplomatic relations were established between Monomatapa and the Portuguese, the former proclaimed the King of Portugal to be his chief wife — the wife of his right hand —

could hardly breathe, at which they all clapped hands, and the herald at the entrance cried to all the crowd outside to clap their hands, for the king's chief wife had been pleased to laugh. Then they made me stand up, and Monomatapa with his own hands put these gold bracelets on my arms and these anklets on my legs. It seems that is an honour he gives only to equals. For the next week I sat every day in state, while every one within two days' journey came to pay homage to me. Every man brought a present, either a goat or a cow, according to his means, and the very poor brought each man a great bundle of thatch. The cattle they gave me, if herded together, would need a square mile of pasture to feed on, and before I left the country they were building me a house after their fashion, as large almost as this fortress."

"Then there will be room in it for me," whispered Dona Beatriz. "Go on, John."

He kissed her thin face tenderly and resumed.

"The king gave me three attendants — I have them with me now — who were charged never to leave me. One he called 'my eye.' It is his duty to tell me of all he sees. The second is called 'my ear.' He tells me of all he hears. The third is 'my mouth.' He issues any order I may give, for I am looked upon as too great a person to speak direct with any one except Monomatapa himself. All this time I was wondering why I did not get the Governor of Mozambique to be the wife of his left hand, and the rest of the Portuguese nation to be his inferior wives.

orders from the general as to what I was to do, and meanwhile thought it best to go and see the mines of which the Portuguese imagine such great things. For six months I travelled up and down the whole length of Monomatapa's empire, being feasted and honoured wherever I went. I believe that Monomatapa, fearing to lose his throne, was glad to have me after he had lost his terror of me, believing that I should help him to stay in power. The mines are poor enough, but oh, dear heart, what country! Every day I climbed to the top of one of their great bare granite hills and saw league upon league of rolling down and fertile valley. It was burned and black when I first came, but the rains came soon — the people believe I brought them — and soon all was green and beautiful. And what air! Every breath gives new vigour. Midday is hot in that land, but the mornings and evenings are cool, and the nights are cold so that one wakes refreshed. And what royal hunting we had! Sometimes I and a score of the chief men stood on a low hill while three or four thousand men in a great circle drove the game towards us so that we slew them with spears. I killed three lions, which only a king may kill. No word came from the general all this while, and I became sick with longing for you, so summoned my bodyguard to accompany me, and here I am."

"But you will go back and I will go with you," said Dona Beatriz, twining her arms around her lover's neck. "You shall take me away from this dreadful place, whether Dom Vasco approves or no."

You shall rule these people justly and Father Sebastian and I will gather their little ones around us and teach them to be good Catholics. Does that meet your royal pleasure, my husband and my king? ”

CHAPTER XXVI

IN WHICH TEMPLE GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

THE sudden and dramatic reappearance from the far interior of a man whom all had believed to be dead caused intense excitement in the Portuguese camp that night and during the following morning. It was announced that Temple was to give an account of himself at a council to be held at noon on the day following his return. Meanwhile men of the original column had to tell again and again to the new arrivals all there was to know of the Englishman, how it came about that he held a captain's rank in the Portuguese army, and what had been his mission to Monomatapa. As only the officers knew that he had been sent on an embassy to Mongasi, and as Monclaros and Dom Vicente had kept to themselves the secret of the forged letter which had sent him on to Monomatapa himself, speculation on this last point was wildly inaccurate.

The common soldiers, whose idea of barbaric potentates was vague, and whose belief in magic was implicit, suggested that single-handed he had defeated Monomatapa's armies by the black art (of which as a heretic he was presumably a master), had usurped

his throne, and had now come to make a treaty with his predecessor's enemies. The better educated members of the relief column, on whom the Jesuit's sermon that day had made an impression, suggested that Barreto, having traitorous designs, had sent Temple to find out what price Monomatapa would pay for the betrayal of the Portuguese forces. When they found that this uncharitable suggestion was bitterly resented by Barreto's men, they acted on a hint astutely dropped by Father Monclaros, and suggested that Temple had deserted to the enemy, and had now come to learn, under cover of some plausible pretext, the plans and the strength of the Portuguese reinforcements.

A few of Temple's old comrades, and especially Senhor Furtado, the provisional captain of Sena, who on the overland march from Natal had stood by Temple when Dom Vicente's party had deserted him, declared their warm belief in his loyalty, but the fact that he was an Englishman, and a convict, carried such weight with the majority that a general opinion was expressed to the effect that if the new general were wise he would have him shot without trial as a traitor and a spy.

Temple had ordered the two hundred armed savages who had formed his bodyguard to encamp half a mile up-stream, and, lest some quarrel should arise between them and the Portuguese soldiers, the strictest orders had been issued that no one should go within hail of them. Nothing, therefore, could be learned from these men, and all waited impatiently

for the time when Temple should give an account of himself to the general and his staff.

No room in the fortress was large enough to hold all the fidalgoes whose rank entitled them to a seat on the council. It was held, therefore, within the square formed by the four sides of the fort. Dom Vasco, with Father Monclaros at his side, sat at a table placed in the shade of the southern wall. The other officers, furniture being scarce in Sena, seated themselves on the ground on either side of the general. A sentry stood at the entrance to the courtyard to keep off all who were not entitled to be present.

Now it happened that the man told off to act as sentry was none other than Black Jorge, the man who had joined in the conspiracy to seize the *Sao Raphael* and had loyally stood by Temple when he had assumed command over those who survived its wreck. He had overheard and believed the rumours that the Englishman had deserted to Monomatapa, and was determined to listen with all his attention to his story, with the object of ascertaining whether it would be profitable for himself to do likewise.

At the very outset the general opinion went against Temple. Directly he mentioned the letter he had received ordering him to go on from Mongasi's village to Monomatapa, Dom Vasco interrupted him —

“I know of no such letter,” he declared. “The letter which I caused to be written to you ordered you to return. Was it not so, Father Monclaros?”

The Jesuit lied glibly, and a heated controversy arose. Challenged to produce the letter, Temple replied that having seen no reason for keeping it he had destroyed it. He was allowed to proceed with his story, but the general impression that he had deserted to the enemy gained ground, and he was made to feel that he stood before his fellow officers not as a soldier who has carried out a brilliant piece of work, but as one who has to defend himself against well-grounded suspicions.

There were murmurs of applause, however, when he related how he had gone alone into Monomatapa's presence, and a spontaneous cheer arose as he told of the terror which had caused that much-dreaded potentate to kneel at his feet.

"What terms did you make with him on behalf of his Majesty the King of Portugal?"

"I utterly failed to make him understand that any such monarch exists," replied Temple, "for his courtiers tell him that he is the only king on earth. He had heard of the Portuguese through his headmen, but he took little interest in you after he had learned of your retreat. His magicians told him that they had woven such powerful spells over his dominions that you could not cross his frontiers. I therefore made treaty with him as if on my own behalf. In accordance with my instructions, I demanded that he should expel all Moors from his dominions. This he promised to do, but I doubt if he has power to keep his word or whether it would be to your advantage if he

did. I demanded that he should admit your missionaries, and he offered no objection. I demanded that he should put to death the men who caused Father Dom Gonzalo to be murdered, and he replied that he had long since done so, though in this I believe he lied. Finally, I demanded all mines in his dominions. He replied that he gave them to me freely, and I in duty bound give them as freely to you."

At this magnificent act of loyalty a loud cheer arose from the assembled fidalgoes. Father Monclaros saw that the general opinion was veering round in favour of Temple and feared that his announcement would inspirit the officers to go on with a crusade he had done so much to ruin. He scornfully interposed —

"You are very generous, senhor, but the mines are not yours to give. They were granted with the rest of Africa and Asia to His Most Faithful Majesty, the King of Portugal, when His Holiness, Pope Alexander VI. divided the then unknown world between Spain and Portugal."

Temple laughed. "Then there is no need to quarrel over them, Father," he replied. "Perhaps I should not have been so generous if the mines had been of any value either to myself or to Portugal. They are scattered all over the country, and for the most part are so poor that a man labouring all day for a week, will scarcely take a cruzado's worth of gold. If you work the mines by slave labour, you will need a soldier to stand over each slave to see

that he does his work, for Kaffirs are like the rest of us, they will not work without reward unless you beat them. You would thus need an army to occupy the country and another army to maintain communication with the coast, and when you had paid your soldiers there would be little gold left for the King of Portugal, for every ounce of gold would have cost more than it was worth."

"How then do you advise we should get the gold?" asked Dom Vasco, forced against his will to see reason in Temple's argument.

"By trade, as the Arabs do. The Kaffirs greatly desire to possess cloth, and have no idea of its value. For a fathom of cloth such as you may buy in Goa for a few pence they will give a quill full of gold dust worth, I estimate, two cruzados. You will find it cheaper to buy the gold at these prices than to force men to mine it for you."

"You would counsel us to abandon the conquest, then," inquired Monclaros, surprised that Temple had hit on an economic truth which he himself had realized long before, and thinking that he had found in the Englishman an unexpected ally, "and advance no further into the country except as merchants?"

"I would counsel you to leave this place, where neither men nor even cattle can live for long, and settle in the land of Monomatapa, as fair and healthy a land as any on this earth. A garrison you must leave to keep the highway open, and garrisons you must have in Monomatapa's land lest he turn traitor. But I counsel you to seek to live at peace, and win

by honest trade the wealth that I believe you will never win with the sword. A stroke of fortune has given me power in that land equal to that of Monomatapa himself. I will be your protector until you have established yourselves and then I will ask, in return for my services, license and the means to return to my own country with the dear lady who is to be my wife."

Again a murmur of applause arose, and again the Jesuit endeavoured to counteract it.

"You will be our protector, indeed!" he cried scornfully. "These are big words to come from a convict's mouth. Remember, convict, that your life is forfeit, and that you live from day to day only by clemency of His Excellency Dom Vasco Fernandez Homem. Your Excellency, this heretic was taken at Ormuz and convicted of being an English spy. Can you not see that having traitorously gone over to the enemy, inspired by hatred of the Portuguese, he wishes to lure us into the country of his heathen ally that he may utterly destroy us? How long would it be before he betrayed us? You know that the English are a race of pirates, as destitute of faith and honour as they are of religion. You know the harm they do every year to the fleets of his Most Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain. Do you suppose they have any greater respect for the Portuguese? On behalf of his Majesty the King, I bid you arrest this traitor."

At this Senhor Furtado rose in his place.

"Shame on you, Father Monclaros!" he cried.

"This is the man who brought me and five others out of slavery in Inyaka's village. He is as gallant a gentleman as ever wore sword, and no more a traitor than you are."

A few others followed Furtado's lead and cried, "Shame, shame. Let the Englishman be heard," but most of those present supported Monclaros, shouting, "Down with the heretic," "Back to the galleys, convict," "To the gallows with the English pirate," "Death to the traitor."

Temple looked round on the yelping crowd with a sneer on his face, then he turned to Homem —

"An Englishman I am, and one who has little cause to love the Portuguese, yet I served Francisco Barreto faithfully and would serve you faithfully if you choose. If you accept my services, well and good. If not, I will go my way, for I owe allegiance neither to you nor the King of Portugal."

Dom Vasco wavered. Monclaros sprang to his feet.

"Enough of this! The spy must die. Seize him and bind him, senhors!"

At this Dom Vicente left his place and ran towards the Englishman. Temple swung round and met his rush with a blow of his fist that, taking him full on the point of the jaw, sent him reeling to the ground.

"Be thankful that my sword is too good for such as you," he said. "*A Deus*, Dom Vasco; since you refuse my services I will go my own way."

He strode towards the door. Then at last Dom Vasco made up his mind.

"Arrest the Englishman," he commanded. "Bar the way, sentry."

A dozen fidalgoes sprang forward to obey. In another moment the Englishman would have been overpowered had not Black Jorge, the sentry, who had no love for his officers but an intense respect for Temple, acted with extraordinary clumsiness. He jumped away from the entrance as if afraid that Temple would run him through, then swinging his long halberd aloft he brought it down in such a way that it missed Temple's head by a good six inches but dealt a crushing blow to the shins of his foremost pursuer. The unhappy fidalgo fell prostrate and another following hard behind him tripped over his body and fell likewise, momentarily blocking the entrance.

"*A Deus*, senhors," shouted Temple in derision, then grasping his dangling scabbard lest it should trip him, settled himself to run. The council broke up in confusion, for most of those present, urged on by Monclaros, streamed out of the fortress to chase the fugitive. Dom Vasco mounted the rampart to see the result of the hunt, accompanied by those who by reason of shortness of breath or indifference to the issue did not care to join in it. The race was soon decided. Temple had a double advantage. Constant hard exercise and the fine air of Monomatapa's country had steeled his muscles, whereas those who followed him were enervated by the

climate and forced inactivity. Temple, too, ran with a single purpose, but every fidalgo who found himself momentarily leading the hunt prudently slackened his pace for a while to enable his companions to come up with him. Half an hour later the pursuers returned, dripping with perspiration, weary, and crestfallen.

“We chased him till he reached his Kaffir body-guard,” reported one of them to Dom Vasco, “and his men closed round him and came forward to attack us. Seeing ourselves outnumbered we withdrew, but came back by way of the river bank and destroyed his canoes. When they saw us retire they turned back, and leaving their camp, struck southwards towards the hills.”

“May the devil go with him! We are well rid of him,” said Dom Vasco. “His treachery decides one debateable point. If we advance against Monomatapa again we must advance by way of Sofala, for we may be sure that he will raise the tribes against us all along our former route.”

CHAPTER XXVII

A PATH OF GOLD

THE private soldier who does not grumble when told off for extra duty is as rare as is the man in other walks of life who considers himself overpaid. Black Jorge, the mulatto gunner, grumbled both vehemently and fluently when the sergeant of the guard chose him that evening to go on sentry-go guard over the canoes that the relief column had brought up the river.

"I was on guard at the council all the afternoon, sergeant," he complained, "and nearly got myself run through by the mad Englishman. It's not my turn again. Besides, the new-comers ought to do the work and give us poor fellows a rest."

"You let the Englishman escape! Be thankful you are not in irons!" retorted the sergeant; and Black Jorge gulped down the last mouthfuls of his supper, and, still muttering curses, made his way to the beach.

The canoes had been hauled up on to the sand that fringed the water-side. Some of them were empty, as the foodstuffs that the relief column had brought had been unloaded and locked in the

fortress, for common soldiers regard the stealing of extra rations as a very venial sin. Those that had not carried eatables were still loaded ; and it was over these that Black Jorge was stationed.

“Who the devil wants to steal ammunition?” muttered the mulatto, as he took up his post. “They make work for us poor fellows.”

Jorge was not of an artistic temperament, or he might have found comfort in the beauty of the scene. The broad river, that had glittered all day under the burning sun with a blinding steel-grey glare, now shone with beautiful mellow tints reflected from the warm glow of the dying day. Later the light of a moon softened the outlines of the fort, the church, and the tents, so that these, bare and ugly by daylight, seemed to blend harmoniously with the silver grey landscape. Jorge, however, preferred sleep to natural beauty, and to keep himself awake until the orderly officer had been his rounds he composed lurid maledictions against his sergeant, his officers, the country, and the crusade on which he had been compelled to embark.

Jorge had none of the pride of race and the lust of conquest which made heroes of many of his countrymen. Both of his grandfathers had been Guinea slaves, for Portugal's first mighty effort to subdue Asia had so drained away her manhood that to keep the race alive African slaves had been imported to marry the mateless peasant women. His grandmothers had been peasants of the stock that had meekly submitted, at one time to Moorish

overlords, at another to Christian, according as fortune ebbed and flowed between the forces of the Cross and those of the Crescent. It was natural, therefore, that, though no coward and as ready as any man to fight for loot, or even for the mere lust of battle, the idea of fighting for an imperial or a spiritual ideal had no attractions for him. He was tired of fighting to win glory for others. He saw no prospect of finding any personal profit in the crusade against Monomatapa, and all the African element in his nature yearned for a life of ease and indolence. Many such men as himself, both in India and in Africa, had married native women, and had settled down happily to live on the fruit of their wives' toil. All Jorge asked of life was opportunity to do likewise — to marry a young and vigorous native wife, build a little hut, break ground for a garden, and then sleep all day in the shade, while his wife tended the one and cultivated the other. Most heartily he cursed the fidalgoes who proudly styled themselves conquistadores, the crusade, and all concerned in it.

His thoughts reverted to that afternoon's council, and he chuckled to remember how neatly Temple had bowled over Dom Vicente, and how ingeniously he himself had aided the Englishman's escape.

"He is worth the whole lot of those stiff-backed fidalgoes and cavalleiros put together," thought Jorge. "I wonder where he has gone. By Heaven, if I knew I would follow him."

The thought led Jorge to conjure up a picture in

which he strode into some far-away native village and found Temple seated on a throne with a crown on his head, administering justice to loyal and worshipping Kaffirs. In the picture the Englishman shouted a hearty greeting, hailed him as a comrade who had supported him in a thousand dangers, and made him his Prime Minister on the spot. Jorge then imagined himself choosing a bride from a score of dark-eyed beauties and — the African blood was hot in his veins — he decided that he would marry them all. Suddenly the sound of approaching footsteps recalled him to the actual prosaic facts of the night.

The orderly officer for the day was going his rounds with the sergeant of the guard. Jorge challenged, received an answer, reported all well, listened till the officer and his attendant passed out of earshot, then, confident that neither of them would go the rounds again, scooped himself a nest in the cool sand, lay down, and went promptly to sleep.

Before an hour had passed he was roughly awakened, to find his arms and legs held firmly by a dozen hands, another hand over his mouth, and the point of a dagger at his throat.

“If you struggle, or try to shout, you die,” whispered a well-known voice, and Jorge, blinking sleepily, saw that he was surrounded by a score of sturdy Kaffirs and that the Englishman was bending over him. “Nod your head if you understand.”

Jorge nodded as emphatically as is wise for a man who has a dagger at his throat.

"Stand up and put your hands behind you," continued Temple, making a sign to the Kaffirs. They released him and Jorge obeyed. His arms and hands were bound. His mouth gagged. Then Temple whispered in his ear. "Lead me to Father Sebastian's quarters. Move quietly."

Again the gunner obeyed. He led the way up the beach with a brawny savage holding each of his elbows. He showed the Dominican asleep in a tiny straw hut built near the church door, and while he looked on helpless to interfere, the friar was silently seized, gagged, bound, and hoisted on to the broad shoulders of one of the Kaffirs.

"Now, go back to the canoes with these men of mine," whispered Temple again. "If you try to break away, they will kill you. I will follow in a few moments."

The Kaffirs, who seemed to understand exactly what Temple wanted of them, led Jorge back to the beach, where the man who carried the Dominican lowered him gently to the ground. Then all stood silent and motionless as statues, while Jorge wondered how many minutes he had to live. At last he heard the approach of stealthy footsteps, and, looking towards the camp, saw two persons approaching. One, who carried a cumbrous bundle, he soon recognized as Temple. The identity of the other, who was wrapped in a big military cloak, puzzled him. The Englishman lowered his bundle, stooped, and whispered into the friar's ears.

"Forgive me, dear Father. A man who fights

single-handed for his own against an army column cannot choose his methods. Pledge your honour that you will not raise an outcry, that I may unbind you."

The Dominican nodded. Temple slipped the gag from his mouth and the bonds from his limbs, whispering —

"I only wish you to come with me a short distance, and do as I ask you there. Then I shall entreat your forgiveness and let you return."

Then he turned to Jorge, and slipped the gag from his mouth also.

"Speak low or I kill you," he whispered. "What is in that canoe?"

"Arms and ammunition," muttered the gunner.

At a sign from Temple six Kaffirs cautiously launched the canoe.

"Has any canoe cloth in it?" continued the Englishman. Jorge pointed to another, and this, too, was launched. The gunner's thoughts were occupied with an uneasy feeling that he would probably hang when the loss of the canoe was discovered, yet even the fear of death did not prevent his wondering who the person in the cloak might be. Suddenly the problem was solved.

"Make haste, John. Oh, make haste, dear heart," whispered a voice that trembled with excitement, joy, and fear.

"Dona Beatriz," cried Jorge, startled out of the caution imposed upon him.

"Jorge. Is that Black Jorge, the gunner?"

whispered Dona Beatriz. "You will not betray us. Remember all that we have endured together."

"He won't betray us unless he is in love with death," growled Temple. "Get into that canoe, Jorge, and be more quiet, or I'll slit your throat for you."

Jorge obeyed with an inward chuckle. It seemed as if his dream were going to come true. Then the others embarked, and the two canoes were paddled softly upstream. No one spoke. The gunner and the friar sat in one. In the other sat the Englishman, with Dona Beatriz nestling her head against his shoulder, and in his hand Jorge's loaded arquebus. Until they were out of sight of the settlement he kept his eyes fixed astern, but when the last camp-fire was hidden by a bend in the river, he called to the Kaffirs.

"Now row with strength, men, but let no one sing."

He laid aside the arquebus and took Dona Beatriz's hands in both of his.

"Think once more before it is too late," he murmured tenderly. "Think what lies before you. I would rather lose you now, and love your dear memory evermore, than that you should ever for one moment repent having followed me to a comfortless home among savages in the wilderness ——"

"Hush, hush, John," she answered. "What comfort would I have in a land where you were not? Make a pillow for me with your arm, my heart. Never have I had a quiet night's sleep since

you went away, but now my mind is at rest, and I can sleep."

At last the first flush of grey dawn paled the eastern sky, and Temple gave orders to put in to the southern bank. They beached the canoes, and Temple lifted the girl on to the sand.

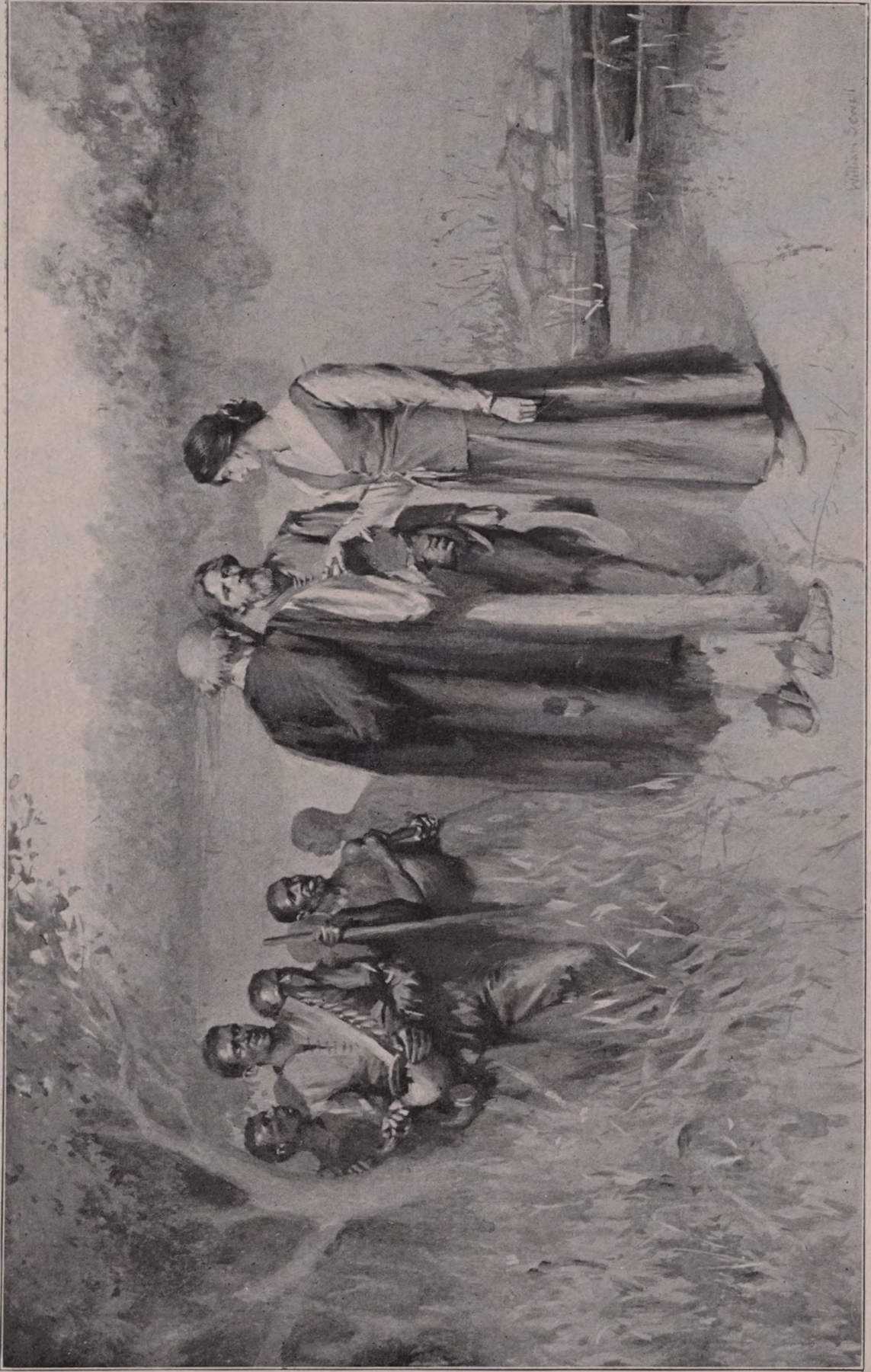
"Forgive me, Father," he said to Father Sebastian, as the latter stepped ashore, "for bringing you by force. I could think of no other plan. I have brought you here to marry me to the lady who is mine by right and by her own will."

"You need not have used force, my son," replied the friar gently, a smile lighting up his kindly face. "I once loved a dear lady, but God, in His infinite wisdom, took her from me after she had taught me what is the most precious gift that He can give to man. Where is the ring?"

Consternation showed on the faces of the lovers. They had none. Father Sebastian fumbled underneath the breast of his gown and drew out a slender gold ring that hung by a string from his neck.

"When I took the Church for my bride I kept this ring. I feared lest I should forget her who awaits me in Paradise, but the years have taught me that I need no bauble to keep her memory green. Bring me water that I may bless it anew."

They found a broken calabash in one of the canoes and brought him water from the river. Then there on a spit of sand those two, who had a dozen times faced death together, joined hands and were made one. Only the wind rustling in the tall



“Then there on a spit of sand these two, who had a dozen times faced death together, joined hands
and were made one.”

reeds made music for the wedding, but God's sky, flaming across half its arc by now with scarlet and green and gold, made a temple more grandly beautiful than any wrought by men's hands.

"We must push on lest they follow us," said Temple, when the simple ceremony was over. "Have you pen and paper in your wallet, Father?"

The friar had both. Temple wrote a note in his uncouth Portuguese.

"To Dom Vasco Fernandez Homem, greeting.

"I have taken my wife to my new home. For the wages that are due to me I have taken two canoes with their cargoes. If you challenge my right to the latter come to Monomatapa's land, and take them from me."

"Now, Jorge," he said, folding the paper and dipping his hand in his wallet, "you shall take this letter to Dom Vasco. I am sorry I had to bind you. Take these coins in compensation. I have no further need of them."

"Would you send me back to the gallows?" protested Jorge. "They will hang me without question for my share in this affair. Come, comrade, there is room for me in this new land of yours, and you will want a master gunner for your men. You would not send a fellow-soldier who had fought and hungered with you to his death."

"As you will. Get into the canoe, then. I will find a messenger at the next village to take the letter," replied Temple. "Now, Father, come with us out of this dreadful place. We can give you a

home, and there is work enough for you. My dear wife has told me that it has been the great desire of your life to labour among the heathen."

"When God shall give me leave, I will come to you, dear children," replied the Dominican, "but not yet. I have a penance to perform first. I have this day married my daughter in God to a heretic. When I have confessed this sin to a fellow priest, and performed what penance he shall give me, then will I gladly come to you, and devote what remaining years God shall give me to the work I have always longed to do."

They argued with the old man, but could not shake his purpose. At last they knelt for his blessing, then re-entered the canoes, and pushed off to face the unknown together.

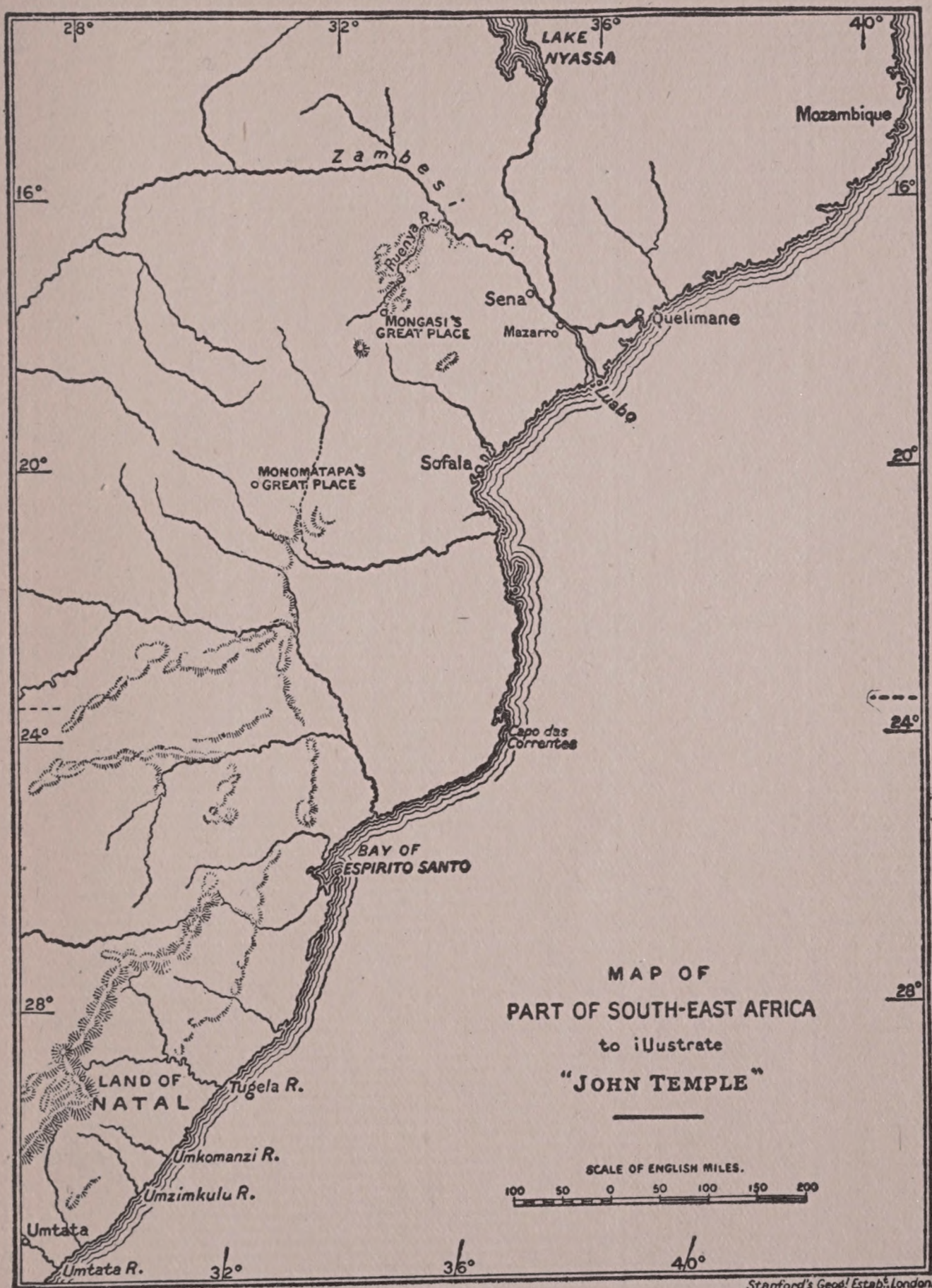
The friar stood and watched them out of sight. By now the whole breadth of the river was lit by the rising sun, and before they disappeared the lovers seemed to the friar's imagination to be journeying along a path of gold. When he could see them no more, he knelt and prayed long and earnestly that God, Who had denied them that ease and comfort which makes for happiness in most men's eyes, should give them His more precious gift of mutual, enduring love. At last he rose, and turned towards the rising sun.

"Leonor, my dear dead love, I have done this thing for your sake," he murmured. "God pardon me if my love be still an earthly one." Then he struggled through the reeds, found a path and slowly

walked back to the fort, to labour there until he had expiated the sin of which he accused himself.

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A week later Dom Vasco Fernandez Homem, leaving a small garrison to hold the fort at Sena, withdrew the troops to Mozambique. Towards the end of the year Monclaros and Dom Vicente, having ruined others without attaining their own end, returned to Portugal, and none regretted their going. Relieved of the Jesuit's influence, Dom Vasco made one more attempt to carry on the crusade against Monomatapa, advanced inland by way of Sofala, won a series of barren victories that cost him as dear as any defeats, then returned to Mozambique, made one more attempt by way of the Zambesi, suffered a crushing defeat, and at last left the country in poverty and disgrace. So a quest begun with golden hopes dwindled to nothing and was forgotten.



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